

LORE OF THE KINSFOLK

BOOK V

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A nine-volume anthology edited and compiled by
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First Edition
MMXVII

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For my sons.

*Ac se maga geonga under his maéges scyld elne
geéode þá his ágen wæs glédum forgrunden.*

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Introduction

Lore of the Kinsfolk is a large anthology of literature that reflects the cultural soul and values of our “Germanic,” “Nordic,” and “Celtic” European ancestors. While these ethnic terms are broad and imprecise, they provide sufficient distinction for there exists within their spiritual nexus a markedly different *Weltanschauung* from those of other cultures.

But what is this world-view? What is the true nature of our forefathers, our folk? I take the position that the best way we can discover the answer is through direct experience of their works. Thanks to the availability of their primary sources, we may “hear” the voices of our ancestors once more in their songs, sagas, epics, and chronicles. In this way their histories return to life as their sentiments and wisdom are renewed and reawakened within our own lives.

Until the availability of this compilation, an anthology such as this was lacking. To understand why, let us look at the “Great Books” and “Western Canon.” Though sometimes pilloried as out-moded and archaic, these canonical selections are still taught in many universities and should be considered carefully with a mind to not only what is included, but also what is excluded. Specifically, what is the perspective of the scholar who chooses Adam Smith over Thomas Malory, *Paradise Lost* over the *Song of Roland*, and so on?

The perspective of such a scholar is not at all original, but instead extends tastes which have their origin in the 14th century with the Renaissance and its disparagement of what Petrarch called the “Dark Ages.” There are three chief roots to this mentality, which so displaced our indigenous one and now completely possesses the modern world: (1) the Black Plague which spread with trade and altered the appearance of the world from one of divine order to that of a grim lottery, (2) the “Little Ice Age” that collapsed the agriculture of the Medieval Warm Period, and (3) Levantine trading and lending practices spreading through Europe, especially as the *Reconquista* ended *al-Andalus*. Together these instilled abstracted, rationalistic materialism and erected an irreconcilable barrier between Nature and Self.

As I have argued in *Mysteries of the Obvious*, the penchant and skill of the Jewish people for cosmopolitan trade was formed in the survival strategies of the Near Eastern sociological and climatological milieu following desertification. This climate change was central to the fall of the previous agriculturally-rooted kingdoms of the Near East, as that fertile, orderly, and harmonious natural world was turned to chaos, plunging good and bad alike into the throes of misfortune.

During this time the hostility of natural forces outside of human control led many to a sense of alienation from life; a perception of divine order as either cruel, indifferent, or nonexistent; and a resulting cynical egoistical materialism. The resource scarcity encouraged competition and selfishness as short-term personal opportunism prevailed over long-term social good, practical strategies in a starving land filled with predatory raiders. When the Black Plague and climate change occurred in Europe, a similar shift in the perception of Nature followed, most especially in the cities where the links to Her spirit were already tenuous and it is indeed in the cities of northern Italy that we first see the resolve of the old European spirit crumble into ruin.

The Jewish merchants and moneylenders who entered Florence found their Gentile champions in the Medici family, who pro-

tested and encouraged the Jewish population and trade practices. The House of Medici, bankrolled by the Jewish moneylenders whose wealth greatly expanded in the Islamic “Golden Age,” became exceedingly rich and powerful. The Medici possessed the largest bank in Europe through the 15th century, sired three popes and many royals, and lent to avaricious royalty throughout Europe.

Jewish collaboration with Gentiles towards international corporatism or imperialism may be found earlier in Rome, among the Muslim Caliphates, onwards through Europe via the Renaissance and Enlightenment, and ongoing in this corrupt age of Modernity. The style of Jewish-Gentile partnership capitalizes on the respective strengths of Jewish financial acumen and legalism in conjunction with Gentile military and industrial power. Contrary to the rhetoric of simplistic anti-Semites, this situation is not due to manipulation or exploitation on the part of the Jews, but transparently achieves precisely what both collaborating parties want, namely power and wealth — of exaggerated importance in desperate times as with decaying Rome or plague-ridden Europe.

Though the oligarchs thereby advance, the congress of commercial enterprise is not without its casualties and detractors, and perhaps no values are truly more antithetical to it than those of our European ancestors. Our concepts of Honor and Love are entirely opposed to the peddler’s *ethos*; the basis of the former is Nature and the deep sense of belonging to Her, while that of the latter is a rationalistic abstraction of life and spirituality entirely away from our Earthly origin to an abstract conception of Universe and Self. These two world views are not simply different perspectives of the same truth, but two diametrically opposed directions of the soul to or away from the real, living natural world.

Chivalry cannot abide Capitalism, nor the contrary. To defeat the obstacle posed to trade, the merchant must disarm the knight; neuter the old concepts of masculinity and femininity; replace “person” with “consumer;” mock sacrifice, loyalty, and honor; and endlessly advertise the Self over the Folk, that is, the individual over their larger sense of belonging within Nature.

Thus it is was that Petrarch, the Tuscan father of Renaissance, was to first describe the previous era as the “Dark Age” (i.e. *saeculum obscurum*), elevating the Greeks and Romans of antiquity while debasing the European successors as ignorant primitives. The Renaissance is the reaction that he and other Northern Italians, informed by cynicism derived of pestilence and famine, initially fashioned in choosing the glittering ephemerality of wealthy and decadent past empires over the ancestral European outlook. While the ancestral outlook could be characterized as ultimately based on the intimate faith in Nature’s inherent goodness and correctness (i.e. the harmonious expression of the divine in the Middle World), the future mentality was utterly aloof from such pedestrianly mundane notions of God, Soul, and Nature.

The New Man of commerce, technology, and imperialism would spread the inticements of the Jews and their imitative collaborators into Belgium, Amsterdam, England, and throughout Europe, promoting his cosmopolitan oligarchical *ethos* everywhere he went. Fresh imperialism caught on fire, profitable colonies were established overseas, ruthless slavery came back into vogue, the cruel Jehovah replaced the compassionate Christ — and subsequently was entirely displaced with Spinoza, Hobbes, Diderot, *et al* — and thereafter all “enlightened” people only

looked with embarrassment and contempt upon those ridiculous old views of the past.

And, so it is that conventional scholars ever since may find Shakespeare's street-smart wit or Cervantes' satirical mocking palatable, but reject the Matter of Britain as unworthy of canonical inclusion. Mortimer J. Alder's famed *Great Books of the Western World* well demonstrates this myopia. After eighteen massive volumes of classical works, not a single piece is included from the eight hundred years spanning Augustine to Aquinas! The modern corruption of value is so great that hundreds of pages of pointless astronomical tables from Kepler and Copernicus are included, but not a paragraph of the Nordic Sagas. And, why but because science and technology are so exceptionally valued in our present society — not due to an innate love of Natural Philosophy or Natural History, but because of their singular utility to commercial advantage!

Some have cast this conflict as a theological one, positing that the Church stifled creativity and imagination prior to the Renaissance. This belief reveals a tremendous myth in the historical understanding of the Christian religion, one that the religion's defenders and detractors both like to perpetuate: that the Christian religion of the Middle Ages is the same slavish, biblical creed as that of today, ignoring the hidden truth of the Reformation. In actuality, the historical Christianity of our ancestors was far more a reflection and furtherance of their own inherent nature than the supposed alien imposition of a Jewish sect.

To understand this, let us consider some facts. Once Imperial Rome had sufficiently weakened due to their own decadence and overreaching dilution, our kinsmen, the Visigoths, sacked Rome and German law, as with the *Visigothic Code*, replaced Roman law over the Western stretches of the former Roman Empire. Unlike the Roman subjects of Constantine *et al*, Christianity was not imposed on the ruling tribes or their kinsmen, but voluntarily adopted over time by the Northern peoples.

Why did Christianity appeal to them? Christianity was, from the beginning, a highly accessible and universal theological system formed from a mosaic of other beliefs including Roman paganism, Mithraism, Stoicism, and Buddhism. Until the dogmatism of the philo-Semitic Puritans and their restoration of Old Testament legalism, Christianity in practice was largely a matter of adopting what most resonated with the believer as variously realized from sect to sect, people to people. Our ancestors could see the strong similarities in the astro-theological underpinnings of Christianity to their heathen systems which had thousands of years travelled with them in their migration from the winnowing agricultural lands of the Near East. Free to adapt Christianity as they wished, they accepted and encouraged what they found interesting, useful, and true, while simultaneously preserving their own beliefs and practices. This was very much like the Roman's espousal of Greek mythology, and they were free to fit the religion to the mold they wished so that it was additive to, rather than subtractive from their own extant philosophies.

This adaption occurred in just the same manner as when the Franks adopted and shaped the Latin language into what we now know as French. Valuing Latin's vocabulary, grammar, literature, and wide usage, the Franks, Burgundians, *et al* repurposed the Roman's language for their own expressive goals, preserving Germanic linguistic traits but, more importantly, the overall personality of their own folk. Thus, Christianity through the Middle Ages, while not a Germanic invention, was a Germanic (and Celtic) *adaptation* of a flexible, complex religion into their own existing spiritual frameworks, from the Yggdrasil tree of salvation to the Celtic Cross.

A tremendous example of this is given us by the *Heliand*, the Saxon gospel of the 9th century. After the tyrannical behavior of Charlemagne towards the Saxons, a different approach by the Frankish Christians was used to convert the remaining pagans. Radically dissimilar from the conventional gospels of Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, the Saxon gospel has a great many divergences from the traditional story of Jesus, portraying him and his Apostles as honorable and brave warriors. Jesus himself is shown as a heroic warrior chief imbued with pagan magical ability, his story a strong fusion of Germanic and early Christian *mythoi*.

As with Christianity, the ideas of our ancestors being generally brutish and cruel, predisposed to early deaths, and acutely scientifically ignorant are wholly in error. Fortunately, this older view of medievalism, so widely propagated by the Renaissance and its followers, has been undergoing a significant revisionism at the hands of some academics. This began with the Romantics, themselves a reaction to the inhumanity of modernity and industrialism, many of whom embraced the spirit of the past and sought to continue its traditions into their own time.

In fact, the true nature of our ancestral character is shown by its honorableness, compassion, piety, idealism, humaneness, and vigor. As such, it reflects the best aspects of the continued soul of our European folk. For the truth is that the so-called "Dark Ages" were really the *Living Ages*, as every interaction was with an intelligent, organismic entity and perceived as within a like-wise Holism. Whereas commercial and, now, mechanical interactions have robbed life of its natural depth, our past kinsfolk lived fully amidst its inherent living complexity. For our ancestors, all of the world was an orderly, living organism, interdependent and related; all the world was a manifestation of the living nature god-head.

The Greeks and Romans were both peoples originally from the North, both spoke Indo-European languages, and both had many cultural traits familiar to our own. This connection is particularly evident with the Romans, and it was a difficult decision to omit works by the Romans, including Virgil's *Aeneid*, Plutarch's *Lives*, the especially insightful works by Julius Caesar and Tacitus on Gaul and Germania, and so on. Likewise, there are strong relations to be found in Slavic literature and such Eastern European history as Nestor's *Tales of Past Years*, but a choice was made to specifically feature the continuous inner path of the Western and Northern Europeans, in no small part because the *Lore* already exceeds 5,000,000 words. Perhaps these deficiencies and others will be remedied in future editions.

The fundamental nature of reality and our own spiritual instincts remain the same as when our ancestors wrote the works that follow. All that has really changed are the form and pervasiveness of the illusions and confutations we face. We can find inspiration in the like-minded revival of the old truths by certain Romantics, several of whom are included in the latter sections of the *Lore* for the beauty and authenticity of their continuations. These recent ancestors remind us that we can today still listen to and learn from the wisdom of our ancient kinsmen, and thereby rekindle within our hearts the truth of our blood, our world, and our soul.

Not only *can* we do this, but this what we *must* do! For it is the path back to reality, back to truth, and back to Nature in all of Her beautiful splendor. The works in the *Lore* are not merely historical relics; they are a sacred heirloom which has been passed to you so that you may live as accords your natural being. Listen to the *Lore of the Kinsfolk* and hear in the spirits of your ancestors your own living nature. And for you who hearken to the call of your forefathers, may their words cause your heart and mind to follow the wisdom of heroes over the wending path of time and fate.

— D.S. Blais, Vinland, December 2017

Chaucer: Troilus and Criseyde

BOOK I.

The double sorwe of Troilus to tellen,
That was the king Priamus sone of Troye,
In lovinge, how his aventures fellen
Fro wo to wele, and after out of Ioye,
My purpos is, er that I parte fro ye.
Thesiphone, thou help me for tendyte
Thise woful vers, that wepen as I wryte!
To thee clepe I, thou goddesse of torment,
Thou cruel Furie, sorwing ever in peyne;
Help me, that am the sorwful instrument
That helpeth lovers, as I can, to pleyne!
For wel sit it, the sothe for to seyne,
A woful wight to han a drery fere,
And, to a sorwful tale, a sory chere.
For I, that god of Loves servaunts serve,
Ne dar to Love, for myn unlyklinesse,
Preyen for speed, al sholde I therfor sterve,
So fer am I fro his help in derknesse;
But nathelees, if this may doon gladnesse
To any lover, and his cause awayle,
Have he my thank, and myn be this travayle!
But ye loveres, that bathen in gladnesse,
If any drope of pitee in yow be,
Remembreth yow on passed hevinesse
That ye han felt, and on the adversitee
Of othere folk, and thenketh how that ye
Han felt that Love dorste yow displese;
Or ye han wonne him with to greet an ese.
And preyeth for hem that ben in the cas
Of Troilus, as ye may after here,
That love hem bringe in hevene to solas,
And eek for me preyeth to god so dere,
That I have might to shewe, in som manere,
Swich peyne and wo as Loves folk endure,
In Troilus unsely aventure.
And biddeth eek for hem that been despeyred
In love, that never nil recovered be,
And eek for hem that falsly been apeyred
Thorugh wikked tonges, be it he or she;
Thus biddeth god, for his benignitee,
To graunte hem sone out of this world to pace,
That been despeyred out of Loves grace.

And biddeth eek for hem that been at ese,
 That god hem graunte ay good perseveraunce,
 And sende hem might hir ladies so to plesse,
 That it to Love be worship and plesaunce.
 For so hope I my soule best avaunce,
 To preye for hem that Loves servaunts be,
 And wryte hir wo, and live in charitee.
 And for to have of hem compassioun
 As though I were hir owene brother dere.
 Now herkeneth with a gode entencioun,
 For now wol I gon streight to my matere,
 In whiche ye may the double sorwes here
 Of Troilus, in loving of Criseyde,
 And how that she forsook him er she deyde.
 It is wel wist, how that the Grekes stronge
 In armes with a thousand shippes wente
 To Troyewardes, and the citee longe
 Assegeden neigh ten yeer er they stente,
 And, in diverse wyse and oon entente,
 The ravissching to wreken of Eleyne,
 By Paris doon, they wroughten al hir peyne.
 Now fil it so, that in the toun ther was
 Dwellinge a lord of greet auctoritee,
 A gret devyn that cleped was Calkas,
 That in science so expert was, that he
 Knew wel that Troye sholde destroyed be,
 By answer of his god, that highte thus,
 Daun Phebus or Apollo Delphicus.
 So whan this Calkas knew by calculinge,
 And eek by answer of this Appollo,
 That Grekes sholden swich a peple bringe,
 Thorugh which that Troye moste been for-do,
 He caste anon out of the toun to go;
 For wel wiste he, by sort, that Troye sholde
 Destroyed been, ye, wolde who-so nolde.
 For which, for to departen softly
 Took purpos ful this forknowinge wyse,
 And to the Grekes ost ful prively
 He stal anon; and they, in curteys wyse,
 Him deden bothe worship and servyse,
 In trust that he hath conning hem to rede
 In every peril which that is to drede.
 The noyse up roos, whan it was first aspyed,
 Thorugh al the toun, and generally was spoken,
 That Calkas traytor fled was, and allyed
 With hem of Grece; and casten to ben wroken
 On him that falsly hadde his feith so broken;
 And seyden, he and al his kin at ones
 Ben worthy for to brennen, fel and bones.
 Now hadde Calkas left, in this meschaunce,
 Al unwist of this false and wikked dede,
 His doughter, which that was in gret penaunce,
 For of hir lyf she was ful sore in drede,
 As she that niste what was best to rede;
 For bothe a widowe was she, and allone

Of any freend, to whom she dorste hir mone.
Criseyde was this lady name a-right;
As to my dome, in al Troyes citee
Nas noon so fair, for passing every wight
So aungellyk was hir natyf beautee,
That lyk a thing immortal semed she,
As doth an hevenish parfit creature,
That doun were sent in scorning of nature.
This lady, which that al-day herde at ere
Hir fadres shame, his falsnesse and tresoun,
Wel nigh out of hir wit for sorwe and fere,
In widewes habit large of samit broun,
On knees she fil biforn Ector a-doun;
With pitous voys, and tendrely wepinge,
His mercy bad, hir-selven excusinge.
Now was this Ector pitous of nature,
And saw that she was sorwfully bigoon,
And that she was so fair a creature;
Of his goodnesse he gladed hir anoon,
And seyde, 'lat your fadres treson goon
Forth with mischaunce, and ye your-self, in Ioye,
Dwelleth with us, whyl you good list, in Troye.
And al thonour that men may doon yow have,
As ferforth as your fader dwelled here,
Ye shul han, and your body shal men save,
As fer as I may ought enquire or here.'
And she him thonked with ful humble chere,
And ofter wolde, and it hadde ben his wille,
And took hir leve, and hoom, and held hir stille.
And in hir hous she abood with swich meynne
As to hir honour nede was to holde;
And whyl she was dwellinge in that citee,
Kepte hir estat, and bothe of yonge and olde
Ful wel beloved, and wel men of hir tolde.
But whether that she children hadde or noon,
I rede it nought; therfore I lete it goon.
The thinges fellen, as they doon of werre,
Bitwixen hem of Troye and Grekes ofte;
For som day boughten they of Troye it derre,
And eft the Grekes founden no thing softe
The folk of Troye; and thus fortune on-lofte,
And under eft, gan hem to wheelen bothe
After hir cours, ay whyl they were wrothe.
But how this toun com to destruccioun
Ne falleth nought to purpos me to telle;
For it were here a long disgressioun
Fro my matere, and yow to longe dwelle.
But the Troyane gestes, as they felle,
In Omer, or in Dares, or in Dyte,
Who-so that can, may rede hem as they wryte.
But though that Grekes hem of Troye shetten,
And hir citee bisegede al a-boute,
Hir olde usage wolde they not letten,
As for to honoure hir goddes ful devoute;
But aldermost in honour, out of doute,

They hadde a relik hight Palladion,
 That was hir trist a-boven everichon.
 And so bifel, whan comen was the tyme
 Of Aperil, whan clothed is the mede
 With newe grene, of lusty Ver the pryme,
 And swote smellen floures whyte and rede,
 In sondry wyse shewed, as I rede,
 The folk of Troye hir observaunces olde,
 Palladiones feste for to holde.
 And to the temple, in al hir beste wyse,
 In general, ther wente many a wight,
 To herknen of Palladion the servyse;
 And namely, so many a lusty knight,
 So many a lady fresh and mayden bright,
 Ful wel arrayed, bothe moste and leste,
 Ye, bothe for the seson and the feste.
 Among thise othere folk was Criseyda,
 In widewes habite blak; but nathelees,
 Right as our firste lettre is now an A,
 In beautee first so stood she, makelees;
 Hir godly looking gladede al the prees.
 Nas never seyn thing to ben preysed derre,
 Nor under cloude blak so bright a sterre
 As was Criseyde, as folk seyde everichoon
 That hir bihelden in hir blake wede;
 And yet she stood ful lowe and stille alloon,
 Bihinden othere folk, in litel brede,
 And neigh the dore, ay under shames drede,
 Simple of a-tyr, and debonaire of chere,
 With ful assured loking and manere.
 This Troilus, as he was wont to gyde
 His yonge knightes, ladde hem up and doun
 In thilke large temple on every syde,
 Biholding ay the ladyes of the toun,
 Now here, now there, for no devocioun
 Hadde he to noon, to reven him his reste,
 But gan to preyse and lakken whom him leste.
 And in his walk ful fast he gan to wayten
 If knight or squyer of his companye
 Gan for to syke, or lete his eyen bayten
 On any woman that he coude aspye;
 He wolde smyle, and holden it folye,
 And seye him thus, 'god wot, she slepeth softe
 For love of thee, whan thou tornest ful ofte!
 'I have herd told, pardieux, of your livinge,
 Ye lovers, and your lewede observaunces,
 And which a labour folk han in winninge
 Of love, and, in the keping, which doutaunces;
 And whan your preye is lost, wo and penaunces;
 O verrey foles! nyce and blinde be ye;
 Ther nis not oon can war by other be.'
 And with that word he gan cast up the browe,
 Ascaunces, 'lo! is this nought wysly spoken?'
 At which the god of love gan loken rowe
 Right for despyt, and shoop for to ben wroken;

He kidde anon his bowe nas not broken;
For sodeynly he hit him at the fulle;
And yet as proud a pekok can he pulle.
O blinde world, O blinde entencioun!
How ofte falleth al theeffect contraire
Of surquidrye and foul presumpcioun;
For caught is proud, and caught is debonaire.
This Troilus is clomben on the staire,
And litel weneth that he moot descenden.
But al-day falleth thing that foles ne wenden.
As proude Bayard ginneth for to skippe
Out of the wey, so priketh him his corn,
Til he a lash have of the longe whippe,
Than thenketh he, 'though I prounce al biforn
First in the trays, ful fat and newe shorn,
Yet am I but an hors, and horses lawe
I moot endure, and with my feres drawe.'
So ferde it by this fers and proude knight;
Though he a worthy kinges sone were,
And wende no-thing hadde had swiche might
Ayens his wil that sholde his herte stere,
Yet with a look his herte wex a-fere,
That he, that now was most in pryde above,
Wex sodeynly most subget un-to love.
For-thy ensample taketh of this man,
Ye wyse, proude, and worthy folkes alle,
To scornen Love, which that so sone can
The freedom of your hertes to him thralle;
For ever it was, and ever it shal bifalle,
That Love is he that alle thing may binde;
For may no man for-do the lawe of kinde.
That this be sooth, hath preved and doth yet;
For this trowe I ye knowen, alle or some,
Men reden not that folk han gretter wit
Than they that han be most with love y-nome;
And strengest folk ben therwith overcome,
The worthiest and grettest of degree;
This was, and is, and yet men shal it see.
And trewelich it sit wel to be so;
For alderwysest han ther-with ben plesed;
And they that han ben aldermost in wo,
With love han ben confortet most and esed;
And ofte it hath the cruel herte apesed,
And worthy folk maad worthier of name,
And causeth most to dreden vyce and shame.
Now sith it may not goodly be withstonde,
And is a thing so vertuous in kinde,
Refuseth not to Love for to be bonde,
Sin, as him-selven list, he may yow binde.
The yerde is bet that bowen wole and winde
Than that that brest; and therfor I yow rede
To folwen him that so wel can yow lede.
But for to tellen forth in special
As of this kinges sone of which I tolde,
And leten other thing collateral,

Of him thenke I my tale for to holde,
 Bothe of his loye, and of his cares colde;
 And al his werk, as touching this matere,
 For I it gan, I wil ther-to refere.
 With-inne the temple he wente him forth pleyinge,
 This Troilus, of every wight aboute,
 On this lady and now on that lokinge,
 Wher-so she were of toun, or of with-out:
 And up-on cas bifel, that thorough a route
 His eye perced, and so depe it wente,
 Til on Criseyde it smoot, and ther it stente.
 And sodeynly he wex ther-with astoned,
 And gan hire bet biholde in thrifty wyse:
 'O mercy, god!' thoughte he, 'wher hastow woned,
 That art so fair and goodly to devyse?'
 Ther-with his herte gan to sprede and ryse,
 And softe sighed, lest men mighte him here,
 And caughte a-yein his firste pleyinge chere.
 She nas not with the leste of hir stature,
 But alle hir limes so wel answeringe
 Weren to womanhode, that creature
 Was neuer lasse mannish in seminge.
 And eek the pure wyse of here meninge
 Shewede wel, that men might in hir gesse
 Honour, estat, and wommanly noblesse.
 To Troilus right wonder wel with-alle
 Gan for to lyke hir mening and hir chere,
 Which somdel deynous was, for she leet falle
 Hir look a lite a-side, in swich manere,
 Ascaunces, 'what! may I not stonden here?'
 And after that hir lokinge gan she lighte,
 That never thoughte him seen so good a sighte.
 And of hir look in him ther gan to quiken
 So greet desir, and swich affeccioun,
 That in his hertes botme gan to stiken
 Of hir his fixe and depe impressioun:
 And though he erst hadde poured up and down,
 He was tho glad his hornes in to shrinken;
 Unnethes wiste he how to loke or winke.
 Lo, he that leet him-selven so konninge,
 And scorned hem that loves peynes dryen,
 Was ful unwar that love hadde his dwellinge
 With-inne the subtile stremes of hir yē;
 That sodeynly him thoughte he felte dyen,
 Right with hir look, the spirit in his herte;
 Blessed be love, that thus can folk converte!
 She, this in blak, lykinge to Troylus,
 Over alle thyng he stood for to biholde;
 Ne his desir, ne wherfor he stood thus,
 He neither chere made, ne worde tolde;
 But from a-fer, his maner for to holde,
 On other thing his look som-tyme he caste,
 And eft on hir, whyl that servyse laste.
 And after this, not fulliche al awhaped,
 Out of the temple al esiliche he wente,

Repentinge him that he hadde ever y-iaped
Of loves folk, lest fully the descende
Of scorn fille on him-self; but, what he mente,
Lest it were wist on any maner syde,
His wo he gan dissimulen and hyde.
Whan he was fro the temple thus departed,
He streyght anon un-to his paleys torneth,
Right with hir look thurgh-shoten and thurgh-darted,
Al feyneth he in lust that he soiofneth;
And al his chere and speche also he borneth;
And ay, of loves servants every while,
Him-self to wrye, at hem he gan to smyle.
And seyde, 'lord, so ye live al in lest,
Ye loveres! for the conningest of yow,
That serveth most ententiflich and best,
Him tit as often harm ther-of as prow;
Your hyre is quit ayein, ye, god wot how!
Nought wel for wel, but scorn for good servyse;
In feith, your ordre is ruled in good wyse!
In noun-certein ben alle your observaunces,
But it a sely fewe poyntes be;
Ne no-thing asketh so grete attendaunces
As doth your lay, and that knowe alle ye;
But that is not the worste, as mote I thee;
But, tolde I yow the worste poynt, I leve,
Al seyde I sooth, ye wolden at me greve!
But tak this, that ye loveres ofte eschuwe,
Or elles doon of good entencioun,
Ful ofte thy lady wole it misconstrue,
And deme it harm in hir opinioun;
And yet if she, for other enchesoun,
Be wrooth, than shalt thou han a groyn anon:
Lord! wel is him that may be of yow oon!'
But for al this, whan that he say his tyme,
He held his pees, non other bote him gayned;
For love bigan his fetheres so to lyme,
That wel unneth he un-to his folk he feyned
That othere besye nedes him destrayned;
For wo was him, that what to doon he niste,
But bad his folk to goon wher that hem liste.
And whan that he in chaumbre was alone,
He doun up-on his beddes feet him sette,
And first he gan to syke, and eft to grone,
And thoughte ay on hir so, with-oute lette,
That, as he sat and wook, his spirit mette
That he hir saw a temple, and al the wyse
Right of hir loke, and gan it newe avyse.
Thus gan he make a mirour of his minde,
In which he saugh al hoolly hir figure;
And that he wel coude in his herte finde,
It was to him a right good aventure
To love swich oon, and if he dide his cure
To serven hir, yet mighte he falle in grace,
Or elles, for oon of hir servaunts pace.
Imagininge that travaille nor grame

Ne mighte, for so goodly oon, be lorn
 As she, ne him for his desir ne shame,
 Al were it wist, but in prys and up-born
 Of alle lovers wel more than biforn;
 Thus argumented he in his ginninge,
 Ful unavysed of his wo cominge.
 Thus took he purpos loves craft to suwe,
 And thoughte he wolde werken prively,
 First, to hyden his desir in muwe
 From every wight y-born, al-outrely,
 But he mighte ought recovered be therby;
 Remembring him, that love to wyde y-blowe
 Yelt bittre fruyt, though swete seed be sowe.
 And over al this, yet muchel more he thoughte
 What for to speke, and what to holden inne,
 And what to arten hir to love he soughte,
 And on a song anoon-right to biginne,
 And gan loude on his sorwe for to winne;
 For with good hope he gan fully assente
 Criseyde for to love, and nought repente.
 And of his song nought only the sentence,
 As writ myn autour called Lollius,
 But pleylnly, save our tonges difference,
 I dar wel sayn, in al that Troilus
 Seyde in his song; lo! every word right thus
 As I shal seyn; and who-so list it here,
 Lo! next this vers, he may it finden here.

Cantus Troili.

'If no love is, O god, what fele I so?
 And if love is, what thing and whiche is he!
 If love be good, from whennes comth my wo?
 If it be wikke, a wonder thinketh me,
 Whenne every torment and adversitee
 That cometh of him, may to me savory thinke;
 For ay thurst I, the more that I it drinke.
 And if that at myn owene lust I brenne,
 Fro whennes cometh my wailing and my pleynte?
 If harme agree me, wher-to pleyne I thenne?
 I noot, ne why unwery that I feynte.
 O quike deeth, o swete harm so queynte,
 How may of thee in me swich quantitee,
 But-if that I consente that it be?
 And if that I consente, I wrongfully
 Compleyne, y-wis; thus possed to and fro,
 Al sterelees with-inne a boot am I
 A-mid the see, by-twixen windes two,
 That in contrarie stonden ever-mo.
 Allas! what is this wonder maladye?
 For hete of cold, for cold of hete, I deye.'
 And to the god of love thus seyde he
 With pitous voys, 'O lord, now youres is
 My spirit, which that oughte youres be.
 Yow thanke I, lord, that han me brought to this;
 But whether goddesse or womman, y-wis,
 She be, I noot, which that ye do me serve;

But as hir man I wole ay live and sterve.
Ye stonden in hire eyen mightily,
As in a place un-to your vertu digne;
Wherfore, lord, if my servyse or I
May lyke yow, so beth to me benigne;
For myn estat royal here I resigne
In-to hir hond, and with ful humble chere
Bicome hir man, as to my lady dere.
In him ne deynd sparen blood royal
The fyr of love, wher-fro god me blesse,
Ne him forbar in no degree, for al
His vertu or his excellent prowessse;
But held him as his thral lowe in distresse,
And brende him so in sondry wyse ay newe,
That sixty tyme a day he loste his hewe.
So muche, day by day, his owene thought,
For lust to hir, gan quiken and encrese,
That every other charge he sette at nought;
For-thy ful ofte, his hote fyr to cese,
To seen hir goodly look he gan to prese;
For ther-by to ben esed wel he wende,
And ay the ner he was, the more he brende.
For ay the ner the fyr, the hotter is,
This, trowe I, knoweth al this companye.
But were he fer or neer, I dar seye this,
By night or day, for wysdom or folye,
His herte, which that is his brestes yë,
Was ay on hir, that fairer was to sene
Than ever was Eleyne or Polixene.
Eek of the day ther passed nought an houre
That to him-self a thousand tyme he seyde,
'Good goodly, to whom serve I and laboure,
As I best can, now wolde god, Criseyde,
Ye wolden on me rewe er that I deyde!
My dere herte, allas! myn hele and hewe
And lyf is lost, but ye wole on me rewe.'
Alle othere dredes weren from him fledde,
Bothe of the assege and his savacioun;
Ne in him desyr noon othere fownes bredde
But arguments to this conclusioun,
That she on him wolde han compassioun,
And he to be hir man, whyl he may dure;
Lo, here his lyf, and from the deeth his cure!
The sharpe shoures felle of armes preve,
That Ector or his othere bretheren diden,
Ne made him only ther-fore ones meve;
And yet was he, wher-so men wente or riden,
Founde oon the best, and lengest tyme abiden
Ther peril was, and dide eek such travayle
In armes, that to thenke it was mervayle.
But for non hate he to the Grekes hadde,
Ne also for the rescous of the toun,
Ne made him thus in armes for to madde,
But only, lo, for this conclusioun,
To lyken hir the bet for his renoun;

Fro day to day in armes so he spedde,
 That alle the Grekes as the deeth him dredde.
 And fro this forth tho refte him love his sleep,
 And made his mete his foo; and eek his sorwe
 Gan multiplie, that, who-so toke keep,
 It shewed in his hewe, bothe eve and morwe;
 Therfor a tittle he gan him for to borwe
 Of other syknesse, lest of him men wende
 That the hote fyr of love him brende.
 And seyde, he hadde a fever and ferde amis;
 But how it was, certayn, can I not seye,
 If that his lady understood not this,
 Or feyned hir she niste, oon of the tweye;
 But wel I rede that, by no maner weye,
 Ne semed it [as] that she of him roughthe,
 Nor of his peyne, or what-so-ever he thoughte.
 But than fel to this Troylus such wo,
 That he was wel neigh wood; for ay his drede
 Was this, that she som wight had loved so,
 That never of him she wolde have taken hede;
 For whiche him thoughte he felte his herte blede.
 Ne of his wo ne dorste he not biginne
 To tellen it, for al this world to winne.
 But whanne he hadde a space fro his care,
 Thus to him-self ful ofte he gan to pleyne;
 He sayde, 'O fool, now art thou in the snare,
 That whilom Iapedest at loves peyne;
 Now artow hent, now gnaw thyn owene cheyne;
 Thou were ay wont eche loveere reprehende
 Of thing fro which thou canst thee nat defende.
 What wole now every lover seyn of thee,
 If this be wist, but ever in thyn absence
 Laughen in scorn, and seyn, "lo, ther gooth he,
 That is the man of so gret sapience,
 That held us loveres leest in reverence!
 Now, thonked be god, he may goon in the daunce
 Of hem that Love list febly for to avaunce!
 But, O thou woful Troilus, god wolde,
 Sin thou most loven thurgh thy destinee,
 That thou beset were on swich oon that sholde
 Knowe al thy wo, al lakkede hir pitee:
 But al so cold in love, towardses thee,
 Thy lady is, as frost in winter mone,
 And thou fordoon, as snow in fyr is sone."
 God wolde I were aryved in the port
 Of deeth, to which my sorwe wil me lede!
 A, lord, to me it were a greet comfort;
 Then were I quit of languisshing in drede.
 For by myn hidde sorwe y-blowe on brede
 I shal bi-Iaped been a thousand tyme
 More than that fool of whos folye men ryme.
 But now help god, and ye, swete, for whom
 I pleyne, y-caught, ye, never wight so faste!
 O mercy, dere herte, and help me from
 The deeth, for I, whyl that my lyf may laste,

More than my-self wol love yow to my laste.
And with som freendly look gladeth me, swete,
Though never more thing ye me bi-hete!’
This wordes and ful manye an-other to
He spak, and called ever in his compleynte
Hir name, for to tellen hir his wo,
Til neigh that he in salte teres dreynte.
Al was for nought, she herde nought his pleynte;
And whan that he bithoughte on that folye,
A thousand fold his wo gan multiplye.
Bi-wayling in his chambre thus allone,
A freend of his, that called was Pandare,
Com ones in unwar, and herde him grone,
And sey his freend in swich distresse and care:
’Allas!’ quod he, ’who causeth al this fare?
O mercy, god! what unhap may this mene?
Han now thus sone Grekes maad yow lene?
Or hastow som remors of conscience,
And art now falle in som devocioun,
And waylest for thy sinne and thyn offence,
And hast for ferde caught attricioun?
God save hem that bi-seged han our toun,
And so can leye our Iolyte on presse,
And bring our lusty folk to holinesse!’
These wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
That with swich thing he mighte him angry maken,
And with an angre don his sorwe falle,
As for the tyme, and his corage awaken;
But wel he wiste, as fer as tonges spaken,
Ther nas a man of gretter hardinesse
Than he, ne more desired worthinesse.
’What cas,’ quod Troilus, ’or what aventure
Hath gyded thee to see my languisshinge,
That am refus of euery creature?
But for the love of god, at my preyinge,
Go henne a-way, for certes, my deyinge
Wol thee disese, and I mot nedes deye;
Ther-for go wey, ther is no more to seye.
But if thou wene I be thus syk for drede,
It is not so, and ther-for scorne nought;
Ther is a-nother thing I take of hede
Wel more than ought the Grekes han y-wrought,
Which cause is of my deeth, for sorwe and thought.
But though that I now telle thee it ne leste,
Be thou nought wrooth, I hyde it for the beste.’
This Pandare, that neigh malt for wo and routhe,
Ful often seyde, ’allas! what may this be?
Now freend,’ quod he, ’if ever love or trouthe
Hath been, or is, bi-twixen thee and me,
Ne do thou never swiche a crueltee
To hyde fro thy freend so greet a care;
Wostow nought wel that it am I, Pandare?
I wole parten with thee al thy payne,
If it be so I do thee no comfort,
As it is freendes right, sooth for to seyne,

To entreparten wo, as glad desport.
 I have, and shal, for trewe or fals report,
 In wrong and right y-loved thee al my lyve;
 Hyd not thy wo fro me, but telle it blyve.
 Than gan this sorwful Troilus to syke,
 And seyde him thus, 'god leve it be my beste
 To telle it thee; for, sith it may thee lyke,
 Yet wole I telle it, though myn herte breste;
 And wel wot I thou mayst do me no reste.
 But lest thou deme I truste not to thee,
 Now herkne, freend, for thus it stant with me.
 Love, a-yeins the which who-so defendeth
 Him-selven most, him alder-lest awayleth,
 With desespeir so sorwfully me offendeth,
 That streyght un-to the deeth myn herte sayleth.
 Ther-to desyr so brenningly me assaylleth,
 That to ben slayn it were a gretter loye
 To me than king of Grece been and Troye!
 Suffiseth this, my fulle freend Pandare,
 That I have seyde, for now wostow my wo;
 And for the love of god, my colde care
 So hyd it wel, I telle it never to mo;
 For harmes mighte folwen, mo than two,
 If it were wist; but be thou in gladnesse,
 And lat me sterve, unknowe, of my distresse.'
 'How hastow thus unkindely and longe
 Hid this fro me, thou fool?' quod Pandarus;
 'Paraunter thou might after swich oon longe,
 That myn avys anoon may helpen us.'
 'This were a wonder thing,' quod Troylus,
 'Thou coudest never in love thy-selven wisse;
 How devel maystow bringen me to blisse?'
 'Ye, Troilus, now herke,' quod Pandare,
 'Though I be nyce; it happeth ofte so,
 That oon that exces doth ful yvele fare,
 By good counseyl can kepe his freend ther-fro.
 I have my-self eek seyn a blind man go
 Ther-as he fel that coude loke wyde;
 A fool may eek a wys man ofte gyde.
 A whetston is no kerving instrument,
 And yet it maketh sharpe kerving-tolis.
 And ther thou woost that I have ought miswent,
 Eschewe thou that, for swich thing to thee scole is;
 Thus ofte wyse men ben war by folis.
 If thou do so, thy wit is wel biwared;
 By his contrarie is every thing declared.
 For how might ever sweetnesse have be knowe
 To him that never tasted bitternesse?
 Ne no man may be inly glad, I trowe,
 That never was in sorwe or som distresse;
 Eek whyt by blak, by shame eek worthinesse,
 Ech set by other, more for other semeth;
 As men may see; and so the wyse it demeth.
 Sith thus of two contraries is a lore,
 I, that have in love so ofte assayed

Grevaunces, oughte conne, and wel the more
Counsayllen thee of that thou art amayed.
Eek thee ne oughte nat ben yvel apayed,
Though I desyre with thee for to bere
Thyn hevy charge; it shal the lasse dere.
I woot wel that it fareth thus by me
As to thy brother Parys an herdesse,
Which that y-cleped was Oënone,
Wrot in a compleynt of hir hevinesse:
Ye say the lettre that she wroot, y gesse?’
Nay, never yet, y-wis,’ quod Troilus.
’Now,’ quod Pandare, ’herkneeth; it was thus.—
"Phebus, that first fond art of medicyne,"
Quod she, "and coude in every wightes care
Remede and reed, by herbes he knew fyne,
Yet to him-self his conninge was ful bare;
For love hadde him so bounden in a snare,
Al for the doughter of the kinge Admete,
That al his craft ne coude his sorwe bete."—
Right so fare I, unhappily for me;
I love oon best, and that me smerteth sore;
And yet, paraunter, can I rede thee,
And not my-self; repreve me no more.
I have no cause, I woot wel, for to sore
As doth an hauk that listeth for to pleye,
But to thyn help yet somewhat can I seye.
And of o thing right siker maystow be,
That certayn, for to deyen in the peyne,
That I shal never-mo discoveren thee;
Ne, by my trouthe, I kepe nat restreyne
Thee fro thy love, thogh that it were Eleyne,
That is thy brotheres wyf, if ich it wiste;
Be what she be, and love hir as thee liste.
Therefore, as freend fullich in me assure,
And tel me plat what is thyn enchesoun,
And final cause of wo that ye endure;
For douteth no-thing, myn entencioun
Nis nought to yow of reprehencioun,
To speke as now, for no wight may bireve
A man to love, til that him list to leve.
And witeth wel, that bothe two ben vyces,
Mistrusten alle, or elles alle leve;
But wel I woot, the mene of it no vyce is,
For for to trusten sum wight is a preve
Of trouthe, and for-thy wolde I fayn remeve
Thy wrong conceyte, and do thee som wight triste,
Thy wo to telle; and tel me, if thee liste.
The wyse seyth, "wo him that is allone,
For, and he falle, he hath noon help to ryse;"
And sith thou hast a felawe, tel thy mone;
For this nis not, certeyn, the nexte wyse
To winnen love, as techen us the wyse,
To walwe and wepe as Niobe the quene,
Whos teres yet in marbel been y-sene.
Lat be thy weping and thy drerinesse,

And lat us lissen wo with other speche;
 So may thy woful tyme seme lesse.
 Delyte not in wo thy wo to seche,
 As doon thise foles that hir sorwes eche
 With sorwe, whan they han misaventure,
 And listen nought to seche hem other cure.
 Men seyn, "to wrecche is consolacioun
 To have an-other felawe in his peyne;"
 That oughte wel ben our opinioun,
 For, bothe thou and I, of love we pleyne;
 So ful of sorwe am I, soth for to seyne,
 That certeynly no more harde grace
 May sitte on me, for-why ther is no space.
 If god wole thou art not agast of me,
 Lest I wolde of thy lady thee bigyle,
 Thow wost thy-self whom that I love, pardee,
 As I best can, gon sithen longe whyle.
 And sith thou wost I do it for no wyle,
 And sith I am he that thou tristest most,
 Tel me sumwhat, sin al my wo thou wost.
 Yet Troilus, for al this, no word seyde,
 But longe he lay as stille as he ded were;
 And after this with sykinge he abreyde,
 And to Pandarus voys he lente his ere,
 And up his eyen caste he, that in fere
 Was Pandarus, lest that in frenesye
 He sholde falle, or elles sone dye:
 And cryde 'a-wake' ful wonderly and sharpe;
 'What? slombrestow as in a lytargye?
 Or artow lyk an asse to the harpe,
 That hereth soun, whan men the strenges plye,
 But in his minde of that no melodye
 May sinken, him to glade, for that he
 So dul is of his bestialtee?'
 And with that Pandare of his wordes stente;
 But Troilus yet him no word answerde,
 For-why to telle nas not his entente
 To never no man, for whom that he so ferde.
 For it is seyd, 'man maketh ofte a yerde
 With which the maker is him-self y-beten
 In sondry maner,' as thise wyse treten,
 And namely, in his counseyl tellinge
 That toucheth love that oughte be secree;
 For of him-self it wolde y-nough out-springe,
 But-if that it the bet governed be.
 Eek som-tyme it is craft to seme flee
 Fro thing which in effect men hunte faste;
 Al this gan Troilus in his herte caste.
 But nathelees, whan he had herd him crye
 'Awake!' he gan to syke wonder sore,
 And seyde, 'freend, though that I stille lye,
 I am not deaf; now pees, and cry no more;
 For I have herd thy wordes and thy lore;
 But suffre me my mischef to biwayle,
 For thy proverbes may me nought avayle.

Nor other cure canstow noon for me.
Eek I nil not be cured, I wol deye;
What knowe I of the quene Niobe?
Lat be thyne olde ensaumples, I thee preye.
'No,' quod tho Pandarus, 'therfore I seye,
Swich is delyt of foles to biwepe
Hir wo, but seken bote they ne kepe.
Now knowe I that ther reson in thee fayleth.
But tel me, if I wiste what she were
For whom that thee al this misaunter ayleth?
Dorstestow that I tolde hir in hir ere
Thy wo, sith thou darst not thy-self for fere,
And hir bisoughte on thee to han som routhe?'
'Why, nay,' quod he, 'by god and by my trouthe!
'What? not as bisily,' quod Pandarus,
'As though myn owene lyf lay on this nede?'
'No, certes, brother,' quod this Troilus.
'And why?'—'For that thou sholdest never spede.'
'Wostow that wel?'—'Ye, that is out of drede,'
Quod Troilus, 'for al that ever ye conne,
She nil to noon swich wrecche as I be wonne.'
Quod Pandarus, 'allas! what may this be,
That thou despeyred art thus causelees?
What? liveth not thy lady? *benedicite!*
How wostow so that thou art gracelees?
Swich yvel is not alwey botelees.
Why, put not impossible thus thy cure,
Sin thing to come is ofte in aventure.
I graunte wel that thou endurest wo
As sharp as doth he, Ticius, in helle,
Whos stomak foules tyren ever-mo
That highte volturis, as bokes telle.
But I may not endure that thou dwelle
In so unskilful an opinioun
That of thy wo is no curacioun.
But ones niltow, for thy coward herte,
And for thyn ire and folish wilfulnesse,
For wantrust, tellen of thy sorwes smerte,
Ne to thyn owene help do bisnesse
As muche as speke a resoun more or lesse,
But lyst as he that list of no-thing recche.
What womman coude love swich a wrecche?
What may she demen other of thy deeth,
If thou thus deye, and she not why it is,
But that for fere is yolden up thy breeth,
For Grekes han biseged us, y-wis?
Lord, which a thank than shaltow han of this!
Thus wol she seyn, and al the toun at ones,
"The wrecche is deed, the devel have his bones!"
Thou mayst allone here wepe and crye and knele;
But, love a woman that she woot it nought,
And she wol quyte that thou shalt not fele;
Unknowe, unkist, and lost that is un-sought.
What! many a man hath love ful dere y-bought
Twenty winter that his lady wiste,

That never yet his lady mouth he kiste.
 What? shulde he therfor fallen in despeyr,
 Or be recreaunt for his owene tene,
 Or sleen him-self, al be his lady fayr?
 Nay, nay, but ever in oon be fresh and grene
 To serve and love his dere hertes quene,
 And thenke it is a guerdoun hir to serve
 A thousand-fold more than he can deserve.
 And of that word took hede Troilus,
 And thoughte anoon what folye he was inne,
 And how that sooth him seyde Pandarus,
 That for to sleen him-self mighte he not winne,
 But bothe doon unmanhod and a sinne,
 And of his deeth his lady nought to wyte;
 For of his wo, god woot, she knew ful lyte.
 And with that thought he gan ful sore syke,
 And seyde, 'allas! what is me best to do?'
 To whom Pandare answerde, 'if thee lyke,
 The best is that thou telle me thy wo;
 And have my trouthe, but thou it finde so,
 I be thy bote, or that it be ful longe,
 To peces do me drawe, and sithen honge!'

'Ye, so thou seyst,' quod Troilus tho, 'allas!
 But, god wot, it is not the rather so;
 Ful hard were it to helpen in this cas,
 For wel finde I that Fortune is my fo,
 Ne alle the men that ryden conne or go
 May of hir cruel wheel the harm withstonde;
 For, as hir list, she pleyeth with free and bonde.'
 Quod Pandarus, 'than blamestow Fortune
 For thou art wrooth, ye, now at erst I see;
 Wostow nat wel that Fortune is commune
 To every maner wight in som degree?
 And yet thou hast this comfort, lo, pardee!
 That, as hir Ioyes moten over-goon,
 So mote hir sorwes passen everichoon.
 For if hir wheel stinte any-thing to torne,
 Than cessed she Fortune anoon to be:
 Now, sith hir wheel by no wey may soiorne,
 What wostow if hir mutabilitee
 Right as thy-selven list, wol doon by thee,
 Or that she be not fer fro thyn helpinge?
 Paraunter, thou hast cause for to singe!
 And therfor wostow what I thee beseche?
 Lat be thy wo and turning to the grounde;
 For who-so list have helping of his leche,
 To him bihoveth first unwrye his wounde.
 To Cerberus in helle ay be I bounde,
 Were it for my suster, al thy sorwe,
 By my wil, she sholde al be thyn to-morwe.
 Loke up, I seye, and tel me what she is
 Anoon, that I may goon aboute thy nede;
 Knowe ich hir ought? for my love, tel me this;
 Than wolde I hopen rather for to spede.'
 Tho gan the veyne of Troilus to blede,

For he was hit, and wex al reed for shame;
'A ha!' quod Pandare, 'here biginneth game!'
And with that word he gan him for to shake,
And seyde, 'theef, thou shalt hir name telle.'
But tho gan sely Troilus for to quake
As though men sholde han lad him in-to helle,
And seyde, 'allas! of al my wo the welle,
Than is my swete fo called Criseyde!'
And wel nigh with the word for fere he deyde.
And whan that Pandare herde hir name nevene,
Lord, he was glad, and seyde, 'freend so dere,
Now fare a-right, for Loves name in hevene,
Love hath biset the wel, be of good chere;
For of good name and wysdom and manere
She hath y-nough, and eek of gentillesse;
If she be fayr, thow wost thy-self, I gesse.
Ne I never saw a more bountevous
Of hir estat, ne a gladder, ne of speche
A freendlier, ne a more gracious
For to do wel, ne lasse hadde nede to seche
What for to doon; and al this bet to eche,
In honour, to as fer as she may strecche,
A kinges herte semeth by hires a wrecche.
And for-thy lokeof good comfort thou be;
For certainly, the firste poynt is this
Of noble corage and wel ordeynè,
A man to have pees with him-self, y-wis;
So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
To loven wel, and in a worthy place;
Thee oughte not to clepe it hap, but grace.
And also thenk, and ther-with glade thee,
That sith thy lady vertuous is al,
So folweth it that ther is som pitee
Amonges alle thise othere in general;
And for-thy see that thou, in special,
Requere nought that is ayein hir name;
For vertue streccheth not him-self to shame.
But wel is me that ever I was born,
That thou biset art in so good a place;
For by my trouthe, in love I dorste have sworn,
Thee sholde never han tid thus fayr a grace;
And wostow why? for thou were wont to chace
At love in scorn, and for despyt him calle
"Seynt Idiot, lord of thise foles alle."
How often hastow maad thy nyce lapes,
And seyde, that loves servants everichone
Of nycetee ben verray goddes apes;
And some wolde monche hir mete alone,
Ligging a-bedde, and make hem for to grone;
And som, thou seydest, hadde a blaunche fevere,
And preydest god he sholde never kevere!
And some of hem toke on hem, for the colde,
More than y-nough, so seydestow ful ofte;
And some han feyned ofte tyme, and tolde
How that they wake, whan they slepen softe;

And thus they wolde han brought hem-self a-lofte,
 And nathelees were under at the laste;
 Thus seydestow, and lapedest ful faste.
 Yet seydestow, that, for the more part,
 These loveres wolden speke in general,
 And thoughten that it was a siker art,
 For fayling, for to assayen over-al.
 Now may I iape of thee, if that I shal!
 But nathelees, though that I sholde deye,
 That thou art noon of tho, that dorste I seye.
 Now beet thy brest, and sey to god of love,
 "Thy grace, lord! for now I me repente
 If I mis spak, for now my-self I love:"
 Thus sey with al thyn herte in good entente.
 Quod Troilus, 'a! lord! I me consente,
 And pray to thee my lapes thou foryive,
 And I shal never-more whyl I live.'
 'Thow seyst wel,' quod Pandare, 'and now I hope
 That thou the goddes wraththe hast al apesed;
 And sithen thou hast wepen many a drope,
 And seyde swich thing wher-with thy god is plesed,
 Now wolde never god but thou were esed;
 And think wel, she of whom rist al thy wo
 Here-after may thy comfort been al-so.
 For thilke ground, that bereth the wedes wikke,
 Bereth eek thise holsom herbes, as ful ofte
 Next the foule netle, rough and thikke,
 The rose waxeth swote and smothe and softe;
 And next the valey is the hil a-lofte;
 And next the derke night the glade morwe;
 And also Ioye is next the fyn of sorwe.
 Now loke that atempre be thy brydel,
 And, for the beste, ay suffre to the tyde,
 Or elles al our labour is on ydel;
 He hasteth wel that wysly can abyde;
 Be diligent, and trewe, and ay wel hyde.
 Be lusty, free, persevere in thy servyse,
 And al is wel, if thou werke in this wyse.
 But he that parted is in every place
 Is no-wher hool, as writen clerkes wyse;
 What wonder is, though swich oon have no grace?
 Eek wostow how it fareth of som servyse?
 As plaunte a tre or herbe, in sondry wyse,
 And on the morwe pulle it up as blyve,
 No wonder is, though it may never thryve.
 And sith that god of love hath thee bistowed
 In place digne un-to thy worthinesse,
 Stond faste, for to good port hastow rowed;
 And of thy-self, for any hevinesse,
 Hope alwey wel; for, but-if drerinesse
 Or over-haste our bothe labour shende,
 I hope of this to maken a good ende.
 And wostow why I am the lasse a-fered
 Of this matere with my nece trete?
 For this have I herd seyde of wyse y-lered,

"Was never man ne woman yet bigete
That was unapt to suffren loves hete
Celestial, or elles love of kinde;"
For-thy som grace I hope in hir to finde.
And for to speke of hir in special,
Hir beautee to bithinken and hir youthe,
It sit hir nought to be celestial
As yet, though that hir liste bothe and couthe;
But trewely, it sete hir wel right nouthe
A worthy knight to loven and cheryce,
And but she do, I holde it for a vyce.
Wherfore I am, and wol be, ay redy
To peyne me to do yow this servyse;
For bothe yow to plesse thus hope I
Her-afterward; for ye beth bothe wyse,
And conne it counseyl kepe in swich a wyse,
That no man shal the wyser of it be;
And so we may be gladed alle three.
And, by my trouthe, I have right now of thee
A good conceyt in my wit, as I gesse,
And what it is, I wol now that thou see.
I thenke, sith that love, of his goodnesse,
Hath thee converted out of wikkednesse,
That thou shalt be the beste post, I leve,
Of al his lay, and most his foos to-greve.
Ensample why, see now these wyse clerkes,
That erren aldermost a-yein a lawe,
And ben converted from hir wikked werkes
Thorugh grace of god, that list hem to him drawe,
Than arn they folk that han most god in awe,
And strengest-feythed been, I understonde,
And conne an errour alder-best withstonde.'
Whan Troilus had herd Pandare assented
To been his help in loving of Criseyde,
Wex of his wo, as who seyth, untormented,
But hotter wex his love, and thus he seyde,
With sobre chere, al-though his herte pleyde,
'Now blisful Venus helpe, er that I sterve,
Of thee, Pandare, I may som thank deserve.
But, dere frend, how shal myn wo ben lesse
Til this be doon? and goode, eek tel me this,
How wiltow seyn of me and my destresse?
Lest she be wrooth, this drede I most, y-wis,
Or nil not here or trowen how it is.
Al this drede I, and eek for the manere
Of thee, hir eem, she nil no swich thing here.'
Quod Pandarus, 'thou hast a ful gret care
Lest that the cherl may falle out of the mone!
Why, lord! I hate of thee thy nyce fare!
Why, entremete of that thou hast to done!
For goddes love, I bidde thee a bone,
So lat me alone, and it shal be thy beste.'—
'Why, freend,' quod he, 'now do right as thee leste.
But herke, Pandare, o word, for I nolde
That thou in me wendest so greet folye,

That to my lady I desiren sholde
 That toucheth harm or any vilenye;
 For dredelees, me were lever dye
 Than she of me ought elles understode
 But that, that mighte sounen in-to gode.
 Tho lough this Pandare, and anoon answerde,
 'And I thy borw? fy! no wight dooth but so;
 I roughthe nought though that she stode and herde
 How that thou seyst; but fare-wel, I wol go.
 A-dieu! be glad! god spede us bothe two!
 Yif me this labour and this besinesse,
 And of my speed be thyn al that swetnesse.'
 Tho Troilus gan doun on knees to falle,
 And Pandare in his armes hente faste,
 And seyde, 'now, fy on the Grekes alle!
 Yet, pardee, god shal helpe us at the laste;
 And dredelees, if that my lyf may laste,
 And god to-forn, lo, som of hem shal smerte;
 And yet me athinketh that this avaunt me asterte!
 Now, Pandare, I can no more seye,
 But thou wys, thou wost, thou mayst, thou art al!
 My lyf, my deeth, hool in thyn honde I leye;
 Help now,' quod he. 'Yis, by my trouthe, I shal.'
 'God yelde thee, freend, and this in special,'
 Quod Troilus, 'that thou me recomaunde
 To hir that to the deeth me may comaunde.'
 This Pandarus tho, desirous to serve
 His fulle freend, than seyde in this manere,
 'Far-wel, and thenk I wol thy thank deserve;
 Have here my trouthe, and that thou shalt wel here.'—
 And wente his wey, thenking on this matere,
 And how he best mighte hir beseche of grace,
 And finde a tyme ther-to, and a place.
 For every wight that hath an hous to founde
 Ne renneth nought the werk for to biginne
 With rakel hond, but he wol byde a stounde,
 And sende his hertes lyne out fro with-inne
 Alderfirst his purpos for to winne.
 Al this Pandare in his herte thoughte,
 And caste his werk ful wysly, or he wroughte.
 But Troilus lay tho no lenger doun,
 But up anoon up-on his stede bay,
 And in the feld he pleyde tho leoun;
 Wo was that Greek that with him mette that day.
 And in the toun his maner tho forth ay
 So goodly was, and gat him so in grace,
 That ech him lovede that loked on his face.
 For he bicom the frendlyeste wight,
 The gentileste, and eek the moste free,
 The thriftieste and oon the beste knight,
 That in his tyme was, or mighte be.
 Dede were his lapes and his crueltee,
 His heighe port and his manere estraunge,
 And ech of tho gan for a vertu chaunge.
 Now lat us stinte of Troilus a stounde,

That fareth lyk a man that hurt is sore,
 And is somdel of akinge of his wounde
 Y-lissed wel, but heled no del more:
 And, as an esy pacient, the lore
 Abit of him that gooth aboute his cure;
 And thus he dryveth forth his aventure.

Explicit Liber Primus.

BOOK II.

Incipit prohemium Secundi Libri.

Out of these blake wawes for to sayle,
 O wind, O wind, the weder ginneth clere;
 For in this see the boot hath swich travayle,
 Of my conning that unnethe I it stere:
 This see clepe I the tempestous matere
 Of desespeyr that Troilus was inne:
 But now of hope the calendes biginne.
 O lady myn, that called art Cleo,
 Thou be my speed fro this forth, and my muse,
 To ryme wel this book, til I have do;
 Me nedeth here noon other art to use.
 For-why to every lovere I me excuse,
 That of no sentement I this endyte,
 But out of Latin in my tonge it wryte.
 Wherfore I nil have neither thank ne blame
 Of al this werk, but pray yow mekely,
 Disblameth me, if any word be lame,
 For as myn auctor seyde, so seye I.
 Eek though I speke of love unfeelingly,
 No wonder is, for it no-thing of newe is;
 A blind man can nat Iuggen wel in hewis.
 Ye knowe eek, that in forme of speche is chaunge
 With-inne a thousand yeer, and wordes tho
 That hadden prys, now wonder nyce and straunge
 Us thinketh hem; and yet they spake hem so,
 And spedde as wel in love as men now do;
 Eek for to winne love in sondry ages,
 In sondry londes, sondry ben usages.
 And for-thy if it happe in any wyse,
 That here be any lovere in this place
 That herkeneth, as the story wol devyse,
 How Troilus com to his lady grace,
 And thenketh, so nolde I nat love purchase,
 Or wondreth on his speche and his doinge,
 I noot; but it is me no wondering;
 For every wight which that to Rome went,
 Halt nat o path, or alwey o manere;
 Eek in some lond were al the gamen shent,
 If that they ferde in love as men don here,
 As thus, in open doing or in chere,
 In visitinge, in forme, or seyde hir sawes;
 For-thy men seyn, ech contree hath his lawes.
 Eek scarsly been ther in this place three
 That han in love seyd lyk and doon in al;

For to thy purpos this may lyken thee,
 And thee right nought, yet al is seyde or shal;
 Eek som men grave in tree, som in stoon wal,
 As it bitit; but sin I have begonne,
 Myn auctor shal I folwen, if I conne.

Explicit prohemium Secundi Libri.

Incipit Liber Secundus.

In May, that moder is of monthes glade,
 That fresshe floures, blewe, and whyte, and rede,
 Ben quike agayn, that winter dede made,
 And ful of bawme is fleting every mede;
 Whan Phebus doth his brighte bemes sprede
 Right in the whyte Bole, it so bitidde
 As I shal singe, on Mayes day the thridde,
 That Pandarus, for al his wyse speche,
 Felte eek his part of loves shottes kene,
 That, coude he never so wel of loving preche,
 It made his hewe a-day ful ofte grene;
 So shoop it, that him fil that day a tene
 In love, for which in wo to bedde he wente,
 And made, er it was day, ful many a wente.
 The swalwe Proigné, with a sorwful lay,
 Whan morwe com, gan make hir weymentinge,
 Why she forshapen was; and ever lay
 Pandare a-bedde, half in a slomerenge,
 Til she so neigh him made hir chiteringe
 How Tereus gan forth hir suster take,
 That with the noyse of hir he gan a-wake;
 And gan to calle, and dresse him up to ryse,
 Remembringe him his errand was to done
 From Troilus, and eek his greet emprise;
 And caste and knew in good plyt was the mone
 To doon viage, and took his wey ful sone
 Un-to his neces paleys ther bi-syde;
 Now Ianus, god of entree, thou him gyde!
 Whan he was come un-to his neces place,
 'Wher is my lady?' to hir folk seyde he;
 And they him tolde; and he forth in gan pace,
 And fond, two othere ladyes sete and she
 With-inne a paved parlour; and they three
 Herden a mayden reden hem the geste
 Of the Sege of Thebes, whyl hem leste.
 Quod Pandarus, 'ma dame, god yow see,
 With al your book and al the companye!'
 'Ey, uncle myn, welcome y-wis,' quod she,
 And up she roos, and by the hond in hye
 She took him faste, and seyde, 'this night thrye,
 To goode mote it turne, of yow I mette!'
 And with that word she down on bench him sette.
 'Ye, nece, ye shal fare wel the bet,
 If god wole, al this yeer,' quod Pandarus;
 'But I am sorry that I have yow let
 To herknen of your book ye preysen thus;
 For goddes love, what seith it? tel it us.
 Is it of love? O, som good ye me lere!'

'Uncle,' quod she, 'your maistresse is not here!'
 With that they gonnen laughe, and tho she seyde,
 'This romaunce is of Thebes, that we rede;
 And we han herd how that king Laius deyde
 Thurgh Edippus his sone, and al that dede;
 And here we stenten at these lettres rede,
 How the bisshop, as the book can telle,
 Amphiorax, fil thurgh the ground to helle.'
 Quod Pandarus, 'al this knowe I my-selve,
 And al the assege of Thebes and the care;
 For her-of been ther maked bokes twelve:—
 But lat be this, and tel me how ye fare;
 Do wey your barbe, and shew your face bare;
 Do wey your book, rys up, and lat us daunce,
 And lat us don to May som observaunce.'
 'A! god forbede!' quod she, 'be ye mad?'
 Is that a widewes lyf, so god you save?
 By god, ye maken me right sore a-drad,
 Ye ben so wilde, it semeth as ye rave!
 It sete me wel bet ay in a cave
 To bidde, and rede on holy seyntes lyves:
 Lat maydens gon to daunce, and yonge wyves.'
 'As ever thryve I,' quod this Pandarus,
 'Yet coude I telle a thing to doon you pleye.'
 'Now uncle dere,' quod she, 'tel it us
 For goddes love; is than the assege aweye?
 I am of Grekes so ferd that I deye.'
 'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'as ever mote I thryve!
 It is a thing wel bet than swiche fyve.'
 'Ye, holy god!' quod she, 'what thing is that?
 What? bet than swiche fyve? ey, nay, y-wis!
 For al this world ne can I reden what
 It sholde been; som Iape, I trowe, is this;
 And but your-selven telle us what it is,
 My wit is for to arede it al to lene;
 As help me god, I noot nat what ye mene.'
 'And I your borow, ne never shal, for me,
 This thing be told to yow, as mote I thryve!'
 'And why so, uncle myn? why so?' quod she.
 'By god,' quod he, 'that wole I telle as blyve;
 For prouder womman were ther noon on-lyve,
 And ye it wiste, in al the toun of Troye;
 I iape nought, as ever have I Ioye!'
 Tho gan she wondren more than biform
 A thousand fold, and doun hir eyen caste;
 For never, sith the tyme that she was born,
 To knowe thing desired she so faste;
 And with a syk she seyde him at the laste,
 'Now, uncle myn, I nil yow nought displese,
 Nor axen more, that may do yow disese.'
 So after this, with many wordes glade,
 And frendly tales, and with mery chere,
 Of this and that they pleyde, and gunnen wade
 In many an unkouth glad and deep matere,
 As freendes doon, whan they ben met y-fere;

Til she gan axen him how Ector ferde,
 That was the tounes wal and Grekes yerde.
 'Ful wel, I thanke it god,' quod Pandarus,
 'Save in his arm he hath a litel wounde;
 And eek his fresshe brother Troilus,
 The wyse worthy Ector the secounde,
 In whom that every vertu list abounde,
 As alle trouthe and alle gentillesse,
 Wysdom, honour, fredom, and worthinesse.'
 'In good feith, eem,' quod she, 'that lyketh me;
 They faren wel, god save hem bothe two!
 For trewely I holde it greet deyntee
 A kinges sone in armes wel to do,
 And been of good condiciouns ther-to;
 For greet power and moral vertu here
 Is selde y-seye in o persone y-fere.'
 'In good feith, that is sooth,' quod Pandarus;
 But, by my trouthe, the king hath sones tweye,
 That is to mene, Ector and Troilus,
 That certainly, though that I sholde deye,
 They been as voyde of vyces, dar I seye,
 As any men that liveth under the sonne,
 Hir might is wyde y-knowe, and what they conne.
 Of Ector nedeth it nought for to telle;
 In al this world ther nis a better knight
 Than he, that is of worthinesse welle;
 And he wel more vertu hath than might.
 This knoweth many a wys and worthy wight.
 The same prys of Troilus I seye,
 God help me so, I knowe not swiche tweye.'
 'By god,' quod she, 'of Ector that is sooth;
 Of Troilus the same thing trowe I;
 For dredelees, men tellen that he dooth
 In armes day by day so worthily,
 And bereth him here at hoom so gentilly
 To every wight, that al the prys hath he
 Of hem that me were levest preysed be.'
 'Ye sey right sooth, y-wis,' quod Pandarus;
 'For yesterday, who-so hadde with him been,
 He might have wondred up-on Troilus;
 For never yet so thikke a swarm of been
 Ne fleigh, as Grekes fro him gonne fleen;
 And thorough the feld, in every wightes ere,
 Ther nas no cry but "Troilus is there!"
 Now here, now there, he hunted hem so faste,
 Ther nas but Grekes blood; and Troilus,
 Now hem he hurte, and hem alle down he caste;
 Ay where he wente it was arayed thus:
 He was hir deeth, and sheld and lyf for us;
 That as that day ther dorste noon with-stonde,
 Why! that he held his bloody swerd in honde.
 Therto he is the freendlieste man
 Of grete estat, that ever I saw my lyve;
 And wher him list, best felawshipe can
 To suche as him thinketh able for to thryve.'

And with that word tho Pandarus, as blyve,
He took his leve, and seyde, 'I wol go henne.'
'Nay, blame have I, myn uncle,' quod she thenne.
'What eyleth yow to be thus wery sone,
And namelich of wommen? wol ye so?
Nay, sitteth down; by god, I have to done
With yow, to speke of wisdom er ye go.'
And every wight that was a-boute hem tho,
That herde that, gan fer a-wey to stonde,
Whyl they two hadde al that hem liste in honde.
Whan that hir tale al brought was to an ende
Of hire estat and of hir governaunce,
Quod Pandarus, 'now is it tyme I wende;
But yet, I seye, aryseth, lat us daunce,
And cast your widwes habit to mischaunce:
What list yow thus your-self to disfigure,
Sith yow is tid thus fair an aventure?'
'A! wel bithought! for love of god,' quod she,
'Shal I not witen what ye mene of this?'
'No, this thing axeth layser,' tho quod he,
'And eek me wolde muche greve, y-wis,
If I it tolde, and ye it toke amis.
Yet were it bet my tonge for to stille
Than seye a sooth that were ayeins your wille.
For, nece, by the goddesse Minerve,
And Iuppiter, that maketh the thonder ringe,
And by the blisful Venus that I serve,
Ye been the womman in this world livinge,
With-oute paramours, to my witinge,
That I best love, and lothest am to greve,
And that ye witen wel your-self, I leve.'
'Y-wis, myn uncle,' quod she, 'grant mercy;
Your freendship have I founden ever yit;
I am to no man holden trewely
So muche as yow, and have so litel quit;
And, with the grace of god, emforth my wit,
As in my gilt I shal you never offende;
And if I have er this, I wol amende.
But, for the love of god, I yow beseche,
As ye ben he that I most love and triste,
Lat be to me your fremde maner speche,
And sey to me, your nece, what yow liste.'
And with that word hir uncle anoon hir kiste,
And seyde, 'gladly, leve nece dere,
Tak it for good that I shal seye yow here.'
With that she gan hir eyen down to caste,
And Pandarus to coghe gan a lyte,
And seyde, 'nece, alwey, lo! to the laste,
How-so it be that som men hem delyte
With subtil art hir tales for to endyte,
Yet for al that, in hir entencioun,
Hir tale is al for som conclusioun.
And sithen thende is every tales strengthe,
And this matere is so bihovely,
What sholde I peynte or drawn it on lengthe

To yow, that been my freend so feithfully?
 And with that word he gan right inwardly
 Biholden hir, and loken on hir face,
 And seyde, 'on suche a mirour goode grace!
 Than thoughte he thus, 'if I my tale endyte
 Ought hard, or make a proces any whyle,
 She shal no savour han ther-in but lyte,
 And trowe I wolde hir in my wil bigyle.
 For tendre wittes wenen al be wyle
 Ther-as they can nat pleylnly understonde;
 For-thy hir wit to serven wol I fonde'—
 And loked on hir in a besy wyse,
 And she was war that he byheld hir so,
 And seyde, 'lord! so faste ye me avyse!
 Sey ye me never er now? what sey ye, no?'
 'Yes, yes,' quod he, 'and bet wole er I go;
 But, by my trouthe, I thoughte now if ye
 Be fortunat, for now men shal it see.
 For to every wight som goodly aventure
 Som tyme is shape, if he it can receyven;
 And if that he wol take of it no cure,
 Whan that it cometh, but wilfully it weyven,
 Lo, neither cas nor fortune him deceyven,
 But right his verray slouth and wrecchednesse;
 And swich a wight is for to blame, I gesse.
 Good aventure, O bele nece, have ye
 Ful lightly founden, and ye conne it take;
 And, for the love of god, and eek of me,
 Cacche it anoon, lest aventure slake.
 What sholde I lenger proces of it make?
 Yif me your hond, for in this world is noon,
 If that you list, a wight so wel begoon.
 And sith I speke of good entencioun,
 As I to yow have told wel here-biforn,
 And love as wel your honour and renoun
 As creature in al this world y-born;
 By alle the othes that I have yow sworn,
 And ye be wrooth therfore, or wene I lye,
 Ne shal I never seen yow eft with yë.
 Beth nought agast, ne quaketh nat; wher-to?
 Ne chaungeth nat for fere so your hewe;
 For hardely, the werste of this is do;
 And though my tale as now be to yow newe,
 Yet trist alwey, ye shal me finde trewe;
 And were it thing that me thoughte unsittinge,
 To yow nolde I no swiche tales bringe.'
 'Now, my good eem, for goddes love, I preye,'
 Quod she, 'com of, and tel me what it is;
 For bothe I am agast what ye wol seye,
 And eek me longeth it to wite, y-wis.
 For whether it be wel or be amis,
 Sey on, lat me not in this fere dwelle.'
 'So wol I doon, now herkneth, I shal telle:
 Now, nece myn, the kinges dere sone,
 The goode, wyse, worthy, fresshe, and free,

Which alwey for to do wel is his wone,
The noble Troilus, so loveth thee,
That, bot ye helpe, it wol his bane be.
Lo, here is al, what sholde I more seye?
Doth what yow list, to make him live or deye.
But if ye lete him deye, I wol sterve;
Have her my trouthe, nece, I nil not lyen;
Al sholde I with this knyf my throte kerve'—
With that the teres braste out of his yën,
And seyde, 'if that ye doon us bothe dyen,
Thus giltelees, than have ye fisshed faire;
What mende ye, though that we bothe apeyre?
Allas! he which that is my lord so dere,
That trewe man, that noble gentil knight,
That nought desireth but your freendly chere,
I see him deye, ther he goth up-right,
And hasteth him, with al his fulle might,
For to be slayn, if fortune wol assente;
Allas! that god yow swich a beautee sente!
If it be so that ye so cruel be,
That of his deeth yow liste nought to recche,
That is so trewe and worthy, as ye see,
No more than of a lapere or a wrecche,
If ye be swich, your beautee may not strecche
To make amendes of so cruel a dede;
Avysement is good bifore the nede.
Wo worth the faire gemme vertulees!
Wo worth that herbe also that dooth no bote!
Wo worth that beautee that is routhlees!
Wo worth that wight that tret ech under fote!
And ye, that been of beautee crop and rote,
If therwith-al in you ther be no routh,
Than is it harm ye liven, by my trouthe!
And also thenk wel, that this is no gaude;
For me were lever, thou and I and he
Were hanged, than I sholde been his baude,
As heyghe, as men mighte on us alle y-see:
I am thyn eem, the shame were to me,
As wel as thee, if that I sholde assente,
Thorugh myn abet, that he thyn honour shente.
Now understond, for I yow nought requere,
To binde yow to him thorough no behest,
But only that ye make him bettre chere
Than ye han doon er this, and more feste,
So that his lyf be saved, at the leste:
This al and som, and playnly our entente;
God helpe me so, I never other mente.
Lo, this request is not but skile, y-wis,
Ne doute of reson, pardee, is ther noon.
I sette the worste that ye dredden this,
Men wolden wondren seen him come or goon:
Ther-ayeins answer I thus a-noon,
That every wight, but he be fool of kinde,
Wol deme it love of freendship in his minde.
What? who wol deme, though he see a man

To temple go, that he the images eteth?
 Thenk eek how wel and wysly that he can
 Governe him-self, that he no-thing foryeteth,
 That, wher he cometh, he prys and thank him geteth;
 And eek ther-to, he shal come here so selde,
 What fors were it though al the toun behelde?
 Swich love of freendes regneth al this toun;
 And wrye yow in that mantel ever-mo;
 And, god so wis be my savacioun,
 As I have seyde, your beste is to do so.
 But alwey, goode nece, to stinte his wo,
 So lat your daunger sucred ben a lyte,
 That of his deeth ye be nought for to wyte.
 Criseyde, which that herde him in this wyse,
 Thoughte, 'I shal fele what he meneth, y-wis.'
 'Now, eem,' quod she, 'what wolde ye devyse,
 What is your reed I sholde doon of this?'
 'That is wel seyde,' quod he, 'certayn, best is
 That ye him love ayein for his lovinge,
 As love for love is skilful guerdoninge.
 Thenk eek, how elde wasteth every houre
 In eche of yow a party of beautee;
 And therefore, er that age thee devoure,
 Go love, for, olde, ther wol no wight of thee.
 Lat this proverbe a lore un-to yow be;
 "To late y-war, quod Beautee, whan it paste;"
 And elde daunteth daunger at the laste.
 The kinges fool is woned to cryen loude,
 Whan that him thinketh a womman bereth hir hyë,
 "So longe mote ye live, and alle proude,
 Til crowes feetbe growe under your yë,
 And sende yow thanne a mirour in to pryë
 In whiche ye may see your face a-morwe!"
 Nece, I bidde wisshe yow no more sorwe.'
 With this he stente, and caste adoun the heed,
 And she bigan to breste a-wepe anoon.
 And seyde, 'allas, for wo! why nere I deed?
 For of this world the feith is al agoon!
 Allas! what sholden straunge to me doon,
 When he, that for my beste freend I wende,
 Ret me to love, and sholde it me defende?
 Allas! I wolde han trusted, dotelees,
 That if that I, thurgh my disaventure,
 Had loved other him or Achilles,
 Ector, or any mannes creature,
 Ye nolde han had no mercy ne mesure
 On me, but alwey had me in repreve;
 This false world, allas! who may it leve?
 What? is this al the Ioye and al the feste?
 Is this your reed, is this my blisful cas?
 Is this the verray mede of your behestes?
 Is al this peynted proces seyde, allas!
 Right for this fyn? O lady myn, Pallas!
 Thou in this dredful cas for me purveye;
 For so astonied am I that I deye!'

With that she gan ful sorwfully to syke;
'A! may it be no bet?' quod Pandarus;
'By god, I shal no-more com here this wyke,
And god to-forn, that am mistrusted thus;
I see ful wel that ye sette lyte of us,
Or of our deeth! Allas! I woful wrecche!
Mighte he yet live, of me is nought to recche.
O cruel god, O dispitouse Marte,
O Furies three of helle, on yow I crye!
So lat me never out of this hous departe,
If that I mente harm or vilanye!
But sith I see my lord mot nedes dye,
And I with him, here I me shryve, and seye
That wikkedly ye doon us bothe deye.
But sith it lyketh yow that I be deed,
By Neptunus, that god is of the see,
Fro this forth shal I never eten breed
Til I myn owene herte blood may see;
For certayn, I wole deye as sone as he'—
And up he sterte, and on his wey he raughte,
Til she agayn him by the lappe caughte.
Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for fere,
So as she was the ferfulleste wight
That mighte be, and herde eek with hir ere,
And saw the sorwful ernest of the knight,
And in his preyere eek saw noon unright,
And for the harm that mighte eek fallen more,
She gan to rewe, and dradde hir wonder sore;
And thoughte thus, 'unhappes fallen thikke
Alday for love, and in swich maner cas,
As men ben cruel in hem-self and wikke;
And if this man slee here him-self, allas!
In my presence, it wol be no solas.
What men wolde of hit deme I can nat seye;
It nedeth me ful sleily for to pleye.'
And with a sorwful syk she seyde thrye,
'A! lord! what me is tid a sory chaunce!
For myn estat now lyth in Iupartye,
And eek myn emes lyf lyth in balaunce;
But nathelees, with goddes governaunce,
I shal so doon, myn honour shal I kepe,
And eek his lyf;' and stinte for to wepe.
'Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese;
Yet have I lever maken him good chere
In honour, than myn emes lyf to lese;
Ye seyn, ye no-thing elles me requere?'
'No, wis,' quod he, 'myn owene nece dere.'
'Now wel,' quod she, 'and I wol doon my peyne;
I shal myn herte ayeins my lust constreyne,
But that I nil not holden him in honde,
Ne love a man, ne can I not, ne may
Ayeins my wil; but elles wol I fonde,
Myn honour sauf, plese him fro day to day;
Ther-to nolde I nought ones have seyd nay,
But that I dredde, as in my fantasye;

But cesse cause, ay cesseth maladye.
 And here I make a protestacioun,
 That in this proces if ye depper go,
 That certaynly, for no savacioun
 Of yow, though that ye sterve bothe two,
 Though al the world on o day be my fo,
 Ne shal I never on him han other routhe.'—
 'I graunte wel,' quod Pandare, 'by my trouthe.
 But may I truste wel ther-to,' quod he,
 'That, of this thing that ye han hight me here,
 Ye wol it holden trewly un-to me?'
 'Ye, doutelees,' quod she, 'myn uncle dere.'
 'Ne that I shal han cause in this matere,'
 Quod he, 'to pleyne, or after yow to preche?'
 'Why, no, pardee; what nedeth more speche?'
 Tho fillen they in othere tales glade,
 Til at the laste, 'O good eem,' quod she tho,
 'For love of god, which that us bothe made,
 Tel me how first ye wisten of his wo:
 Wot noon of hit but ye?' He seyde, 'no.'
 'Can he wel speke of love?' quod she, 'I preye,
 Tel me, for I the bet me shal purveye.'
 Tho Pandarus a litel gan to smyle,
 And seyde, 'by my trouthe, I shal yow telle.
 This other day, nought gon ful longe whyle,
 In-with the paleys-gardyn, by a welle,
 Gan he and I wel half a day to dwelle,
 Right for to speken of an ordenaunce,
 How we the Grekes mighte disavaunce.
 Sone after that bigonne we to lepe,
 And casten with our dartes to and fro,
 Til at the laste he seyde, he wolde slepe,
 And on the gres a-doun he leyde him tho;
 And I after gan rome to and fro
 Til that I herde, as that I welk allone,
 How he bigan ful wofully to grone.
 Tho gan I stalke him softly bihinde,
 And sikerly, the sothe for to seyne,
 As I can clepe ayein now to my minde,
 Right thus to Love he gan him for to pleyne;
 He seyde, "lord! have routhe up-on my peyne,
 Al have I been rebel in myn entente;
 Now, *mea culpa*, lord! I me repente.
 O god, that at thy disposicioun
 Ledest the fyn, by Iuste purveyaunce,
 Of every wight, my lowe confessioun
 Accepte in gree, and send me swich penaunce
 As lyketh thee, but from desesperaunce,
 That may my goost departe away fro thee,
 Thou be my sheld, for thy benignitee.
 For certes, lord, so sore hath she me wounded
 That stod in blak, with loking of hir yën,
 That to myn hertes botme it is y-sounded,
 Thorough which I woot that I mot nedes dyen;
 This is the worste, I dar me not bi-wryen;

And wel the hotter been the gledes rede,
That men hem wryen with asshen pale and dede."
With that he smoot his heed adoun anoon,
And gan to motre, I noot what, trewely.
And I with that gan stille away to goon,
And leet ther-of as no-thing wist hadde I,
And come ayein anoon and stood him by,
And seyde, "a-wake, ye slepen al to longe;
It semeth nat that love dooth yow longe,
That slepen so that no man may yow wake.
Who sey ever or this so dul a man?"
"Ye, freend," quod he, "do ye your hedes ake
For love, and lat me liven as I can."
But though that he for wo was pale and wan,
Yet made he tho as fresh a contenaunce,
As though he shulde have led the newe daunce.
This passed forth, til now, this other day,
It fel that I com roming al allone
Into his chaumbre, and fond how that he lay
Up-on his bed; but man so sore grone
Ne herde I never, and what that was his mone,
Ne wiste I nought; for, as I was cominge,
Al sodeynly he lefte his compleyninge.
Of which I took somewhat suspeciou, n,
And neer I com, and fond he wepte sore;
And god so wis be my savacioun,
As never of thing hadde I no routhe more.
For neither with engyn, ne with no lore,
Unethes mighte I fro the deeth him kepe;
That yet fele I myn herte for him wepe.
And god wot, never, sith that I was born,
Was I so bisy no man for to preche,
Ne never was to wight so depe y-sworn,
Or he me tolde who mighte been his leche.
But now to yow rehersen al his speche,
Or alle his woful wordes for to soune,
Ne bid me not, but ye wol see me swowne.
But for to save his lyf, and elles nought,
And to non harm of yow, thus am I driven;
And for the love of god that us hath wrought,
Swich chere him dooth, that he and I may liven.
Now have I plat to yow myn herte schreven;
And sin ye woot that myn entente is clene,
Tak hede ther-of, for I non yvel mene.
And right good thrift, I pray to god, have ye,
That han swich oon y-caught with-oute net;
And be ye wys, as ye ben fair to see,
Wel in the ring than is the ruby set.
Ther were never two so wel y-met,
Whan ye ben his al hool, as he is youre:
Ther mighty god yet graunte us see that houre!'
'Nay, therof spak I not, a, ha!' quod she,
'As helpe me god, ye shenden every deel!'
'O mercy, dere nece,' anoon quod he,
'What-so I spak, I mente nought but weel,

By Mars the god, that helmed is of steel;
 Now beth nought wrooth, my blood, my nece dere.'
 'Now wel,' quod she, 'foryeven be it here!'
 With this he took his leve, and hoom he wente;
 And lord, how he was glad and wel bigoon!
 Criseyde aroos, no lenger she ne stente,
 But straught in-to hir closet wente anoon,
 And sette here doun as stille as any stoon,
 And every word gan up and doun to winde,
 That he hadde seyde, as it com hir to minde;
 And wex somdel astonied in hir thought,
 Right for the newe cas; but whan that she
 Was ful avysed, tho fond she right nought
 Of peril, why she oughte afered be.
 For man may love, of possibilitee,
 A womman so, his herte may to-breste,
 And she nought love ayein, but-if hir leste.
 But as she sat allone and thoughte thus,
 Thascry aroos at skarmish al with-oute,
 And men cryde in the strete, 'see, Troilus
 Hath right now put to flight the Grekes route!'
 With that gan al hir meynee for to shoute,
 'A! go we see, caste up the latis wyde;
 For thurgh this strete he moot to palays ryde;
 For other wey is fro the yate noon
 Of Dardanus, ther open is the cheyne.'
 With that com he and al his folk anoon
 An esy pas rydinge, in routes tweyne,
 Right as his happy day was, sooth to seyne,
 For which, men say, may nought disturbed be
 That shal bityden of necessitee.
 This Troilus sat on his baye stede,
 Al armed, save his heed, ful richely,
 And wounded was his hors, and gan to blede,
 On whiche he rood a pas, ful softly;
 But swych a knightly sighte, trewely,
 As was on him, was nought, with-outen faile,
 To loke on Mars, that god is of batayle.
 So lyk a man of armes and a knight
 He was to seen, fulfild of heigh prowess;
 For bothe he hadde a body and a might
 To doon that thing, as wel as hardinesse;
 And eek to seen him in his gere him dresse,
 So fresh, so yong, so weldy semed he,
 It was an heven up-on him for to see.
 His helm to-hewen was in twenty places,
 That by a tissew heng, his bak bihinde,
 His sheld to-dasshed was with swerdes and maces,
 In which men mighte many an arwe finde
 That thirled hadde horn and nerf and rinde;
 And ay the peple cryde, 'here cometh our loye,
 And, next his brother, holdere up of Troye!'
 For which he wex a litel reed for shame,
 Whan he the peple up-on him herde cryen,
 That to biholde it was a noble game,

How sobreliche he caste doun his yēn.
Cryseyda gan al his chere aspyen,
And leet so softe it in hir herte sinke,
That to hir-self she seyde, 'who yaf me drinke?'
For of hir owene thought she wex al reed,
Remembringe hir right thus, 'lo, this is he
Which that myn uncle swereth he moot be deed,
But I on him have mercy and pitee;
And with that thought, for pure a-shamed, she
Gan in hir heed to pulle, and that as faste,
Whyl he and al the peple for-by paste,
And gan to caste and rollen up and doun
With-inne hir thought his excellent prowessse,
And his estat, and also his renoun,
His wit, his shap, and eek his gentillesse;
But most hir favour was, for his distresse
Was al for hir, and thoughte it was a routhe
To sleen swich oon, if that he mente trouthe.
Now mighte som envyouus Iangle thus,
'This was a sodeyn love, how mighte it be
That she so lightly lovede Troilus
Right for the firste sighte; ye, pardee?'
Now who-so seyth so, mote he never thee!
For every thing, a ginning hath it nede
Er al be wrought, with-outen any drede.
For I sey nought that she so sodeynly
Yaf him hir love, but that she gan enclyne
To lyke him first, and I have told yow why;
And after that, his manhod and his pyne
Made love with-inne hir for to myne,
For which, by proces and by good servyse,
He gat hir love, and in no sodeyn wyse.
And also blisful Venus, wel arayed,
Sat in hir seventhe hous of hevene tho,
Disposed wel, and with aspectes payed,
To helpen sely Troilus of his wo.
And, sooth to seyn, she nas nat al a fo
To Troilus in his nativitee;
God woot that wel the soner spedde he.
Now lat us stinte of Troilus a throwe,
That rydeth forth, and lat us tourne faste
Un-to Criseyde, that heng hir heed ful lowe,
Ther-as she sat allone, and gan to caste
Wher-on she wolde apoynte hir at the laste,
If it so were hir eem ne wolde cesse,
For Troilus, up-on hir for to presse.
And, lord! so she gan in hir thought argue
In this matere of which I have yow told,
And what to doon best were, and what eschue,
That plyted she ful ofte in many fold.
Now was hir herte warm, now was it cold,
And what she thoughte somewhat shal I wryte,
As to myn auctor listeth for to endyte.
She thoughte wel, that Troilus persone
She knew by sighte and eek his gentillesse,

And thus she seyde, 'al were it nought to done,
 To graunte him love, yet, for his worthinesse,
 It were honour, with pley and with gladnesse,
 In honestee, with swich a lord to dele,
 For myn estat, and also for his hele.
 Eek, wel wot I my kinges sone is he;
 And sith he hath to see me swich delyt,
 If I wolde utterly his sighte flee,
 Paraunter he mighte have me in dispyt,
 Thurgh which I mighte stonde in worse plyt;
 Now were I wys, me hate to purchase,
 With-oute nede, ther I may stonde in grace?
 In every thing, I woot, ther lyth mesure.
 For though a man forbede dronkenesse,
 He nought for-bet that every creature
 Be drinkelees for alwey, as I gesse;
 Eek sith I woot for me is his distresse,
 I ne oughite not for that thing him despise,
 Sith it is so, he meneth in good wyse.
 And eek I knowe, of longe tyme agoon,
 His thewes goode, and that he is not nyce.
 Ne avauntour, seyth men, certein, is he noon;
 To wys is he to do so gret a vyce;
 Ne als I nel him never so cheryce,
 That he may make avaunt, by Iuste cause;
 He shal me never binde in swiche a clause.
 Now set a cas, the hardest is, y-wis,
 Men mighten deme that he loveth me:
 What dishonour were it un-to me, this?
 May I him lette of that? why nay, pardee!
 I knowe also, and alday here and see,
 Men loven wommen al this toun aboute;
 Be they the wers? why, nay, with-oute doute.
 I think eek how he able is for to have
 Of al this noble toun the thriftieste,
 To been his love, so she hir honour save;
 For out and out he is the worthieste,
 Save only Ector, which that is the beste.
 And yet his lyf al lyth now in my cure,
 But swich is love, and eek myn aventure.
 Ne me to love, a wonder is it nought;
 For wel wot I my-self, so god me spede,
 Al wolde I that noon wistë of this thought,
 I am oon the fayreste, out of drede,
 And goodlieste, who-so taketh hede;
 And so men seyn in al the toun of Troye.
 What wonder is it though he of me have Ioye?
 I am myn owene woman, wel at ese,
 I thank it god, as after myn estat;
 Right yong, and stonde unteyd in lusty lese,
 With-oute Ialousye or swich debat;
 Shal noon housbonde seyn to me "chekmat!"
 For either they ben ful of Ialousye,
 Or maisterful, or loven novelrye.
 What shal I doon? to what fyn live I thus?

Shal I nat loven, in cas if that me leste?
What, *par dieux*! I am nought religious!
And though that I myn herte sette at reste
Upon this knight, that is the worthieste,
And kepe alwey myn honour and my name,
By alle right, it may do me no shame.
But right as whan the sonne shyneth brighte,
In March, that chaungeth ofte tyme his face,
And that a cloud is put with wind to flighte
Which over-sprat the sonne as for a space,
A cloudy thought gan thorough hir soule pace,
That over-spradde hir brighte thoughtes alle,
So that for fere almost she gan to falle.
That thought was this, 'allas! sin I am free,
Sholde I now love, and putte in Iupartye
My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
Allas! how dorste I thenken that folye?
May I nought wel in other folk aspye
Hir dredful loye, hir constreynt, and hir peyne?
Ther loveth noon, that she nath why to pleyne.
For love is yet the moste stormy lyf,
Right of him-self, that ever was bigonne;
For ever som mistrust, or nyce stryf,
Ther is in love, som cloud is over the sonne:
Ther-to we wrecched wommen no-thing conne,
Whan us is wo, but wepe and sitte and thinke;
Our wreche is this, our owene wo to drinke.
Also these wikked tonges been so prest
To speke us harm, eek men be so untrewes,
That, right anon as cessed is hir lest,
So cesseth love, and forth to love a newe:
But harm y-doon, is doon, who-so it rewe.
For though these men for love hem first to-rende,
Ful sharp biginning breketh ofte at ende.
How ofte tyme hath it y-knowen be,
The treson, that to womman hath be do?
To what fyn is swich love, I can nat see,
Or wher bicomth it, whan it is ago;
Ther is no wight that woot, I trowe so,
Wher it bycomth; lo, no wight on it sporneth;
That erst was no-thing, in-to nought it torneth.
How bisy, if I love, eek moste I be
To plesen hem that Iangle of love, and demen,
And coye hem, that they sey non harm of me?
For though ther be no cause, yet hem semen
Al be for harm that folk hir freendes quemen;
And who may stoppen every wikked tonge,
Or soun of belles whyl that they be ronge?'
And after that, hir thought bigan to clere,
And seyde, 'he which that no-thing under-taketh,
No-thing ne acheveth, be him looth or dere.'
And with an other thought hir herte quaketh;
Than slepeth hope, and after dreed awaketh;
Now hoot, now cold; but thus, bi-twixen tweye,
She rist hir up, and went hir for to pleye.

Adoun the steyre anoon-right tho she wente
 In-to the gardin, with hir neces three,
 And up and down ther made many a wente,
 Flexippe, she, Tharbe, and Antigone,
 To pleyen, that it loye was to see;
 And othere of hir wommen, a gret route,
 Hir folwede in the gardin al aboute.
 This yerd was large, and rayled alle the aleyes,
 And shadwed wel with blosmy bowes grene,
 And benched newe, and sonded alle the weyes,
 In which she walketh arm in arm bi-twene;
 Til at the laste Antigone the shene
 Gan on a Troian song to singe clere,
 That it an heven was hir voys to here.—
 She seyde, 'O love, to whom I have and shal
 Ben humble subgit, trewe in myn entente,
 As I best can, to yow, lord, yeve ich al
 For ever-more, myn hertes lust to rente.
 For never yet thy grace no wight sente
 So blisful cause as me, my lyf to lede
 In alle Ioye and seurtee, out of drede.
 Ye, blisful god, han me so wel beset
 In love, y-wis, that al that bereth lyf
 Imaginen ne cowde how to ben bet;
 For, lord, with-uten Ialousye or stryf,
 I love oon which that is most ententyf
 To serven wel, unwery or unfeyned,
 That ever was, and leest with harm distreyned.
 As he that is the welle of worthinesse,
 Of trouthe ground, mirour of goodliheed,
 Of wit Appollo, stoon of sikernesse,
 Of vertu rote, of lust findere and heed,
 Thurgh which is alle sorwe fro me deed,
 Y-wis, I love him best, so doth he me;
 Now good thrift have he, wher-so that he be!
 Whom sholde I thanke but yow, god of love,
 Of al this blisse, in which to bathe I ginne?
 And thanked be ye, lord, for that I love!
 This is the righte lyf that I am inne,
 To flemen alle manere vyce and sinne:
 This doth me so to vertu for to entende,
 That day by day I in my wil amende.
 And who-so seyth that for to love is vyce,
 Or thraldom, though he fele in it distressesse,
 He outhur is envyous, or right nyce,
 Or is unmighty, for his shrewednesse,
 To loven; for swich maner folk, I gesse,
 Defamen love, as no-thing of him knowe;
 They speken, but they bente never his bowe.
 What is the sonne wers, of kinde righte,
 Though that a man, for feblesse of his yën,
 May nought endure on it to see for brighte?
 Or love the wers, though wrecches on it cryen?
 No wele is worth, that may no sorwe dryen.
 And for-thy, who that hath an heed of verre,

Fro cast of stones war him in the werre!
But I with al myn herte and al my might,
As I have seyde, wol love, un-to my laste,
My dere herte, and al myn owene knight,
In which myn herte growen is so faste,
And his in me, that it shal ever laste.
Al dredde I first to love him to biginne,
Now woot I wel, ther is no peril inne.
And of hir song right with that word she stente,
And therwith-al, 'now, nece,' quod Criseyde,
'Who made this song with so good entente?'
Antigone answerde anon, and seyde,
'Ma dame, y-wis, the goodlieste mayde
Of greet estat in al the toun of Troye;
And let hir lyf in most honour and loye.'
'Forsothe, so it semeth by hir song,'
Quod tho Criseyde, and gan ther-with to syke,
And seyde, 'lord, is there swich blisse among
These lovers, as they conne faire endyte?'
'Ye, wis,' quod fresh Antigone the whyte,
'For alle the folk that han or been on lyve
Ne conne wel the blisse of love discryve.
But wene ye that every wrecche woot
The parfit blisse of love? why, nay, y-wis;
They wenen al be love, if oon be hoot;
Do wey, do wey, they woot no-thing of this!
Men mosten axe at seyntes if it is
Aught fair in hevene; why? for they conne telle;
And axen fendes, is it foul in helle.'
Criseyde un-to that purpos nought answerde,
But seyde, 'y-wis, it wol be night as faste.'
But every word which that she of hir herde,
She gan to prenten in hir herte faste;
And ay gan love hir lasse for to agaste
Than it dide erst, and sinken in hir herte,
That she wex somewhat able to converte.
The dayes honour, and the hevenes yē,
The nightes fo, al this clepe I the sonne,
Gan westren faste, and dounward for to wrye,
As he that hadde his dayes cours y-ronne;
And whyte thinges wexen dimme and donne
For lak of light, and sterres for to appere,
That she and al hir folk in wente y-fere.
So whan it lyked hir to goon to reste,
And voyded weren they that voyden oughte,
She seyde, that to slepe wel hir leste.
Hir wommen sone til hir bed hir broughte.
Whan al was hust, than lay she stille, and thoughte
Of al this thing the manere and the wyse.
Reherce it nedeth nought, for ye ben wyse.
A nightingale, upon a cedre grene,
Under the chambre-wal ther as she lay,
Ful loude sang ayein the mone shene,
Paraunter, in his briddes wyse, a lay
Of love, that made hir herte fresh and gay.

That herkned she so longe in good entente,
 Til at the laste the dede sleep hir hente.
 And, as she sleep, anoon-right tho hir mette,
 How that an egle, fethered whyt as boon,
 Under hir brest his longe clawes sette,
 And out hir herte he rente, and that a-noon,
 And dide his herte in-to hir brest to goon,
 Of which she nought agroos ne no-thing smerte,
 And forth he fleigh, with herte left for herte.
 Now lat hir slepe, and we our tales holde
 Of Troilus, that is to paleys riden,
 Fro the scarmuch, of the whiche I tolde,
 And in his chambre sit, and hath abiden
 Til two or three of his messages yeden
 For Pandarus, and soughten him ful faste,
 Til they him founde, and broughte him at the laste.
 This Pandarus com leping in at ones
 And seide thus, 'who hath ben wel y-bete
 To-day with swerdes, and with slinge-stones,
 But Troilus, that hath caught him an hete?'
 And gan to lape, and seyde, 'lord, so ye swete!
 But rys, and lat us soupe and go to reste;'
 And he answerde him, 'do we as thee leste.'
 With al the haste goodly that they mighte,
 They spedde hem fro the souper un-to bedde;
 And every wight out at the dore him dighte,
 And wher him list upon his wey he spedde;
 But Troilus, that thoughte his herte bledde
 For wo, til that he herde som tydinge,
 He seyde, 'freend, shal I now wepe or singe?'
 Quod Pandarus, 'ly stille, and lat me slepe,
 And don thyn hood, thy nedes spedde be;
 And chese, if thou wolt singe or daunce or lepe;
 At shorte wordes, thou shalt trowe me.—
 Sire, my nece wol do wel by thee,
 And love thee best, by god and by my trouthe,
 But lak of pursuit make it in thy slouthe.
 For thus ferforth I have thy work bigonne,
 Fro day to day, til this day, by the morwe,
 Hir love of freendship have I to thee wonne,
 And also hath she leyd hir feyth to borwe.
 Algate a foot is hameled of thy sorwe.'
 What sholde I lenger sermon of it holde?
 As ye han herd bifore, al he him tolde.
 But right as floures, thorough the colde of night
 Y-closed, stoupen on hir stalkes lowe,
 Redressen hem a-yein the sonne bright,
 And spreden on hir kinde cours by rowe;
 Right so gan tho his eyen up to throwe
 This Troilus, and seyde, 'O Venus dere,
 Thy might, thy grace, y-heried be it here!'
 And to Pandare he held up bothe his hondes,
 And seyde, 'lord, al thyn be that I have;
 For I am hool, al brosten been my bondes;
 A thousand Troians who so that me yave,

Eche after other, god so wis me save,
Ne mighte me so gladen; lo, myn herte,
It spredeth so for loye, it wol to-sterle!
But lord, how shal I doon, how shal I liven?
Whan shal I next my dere herte see?
How shal this longe tyme a-wey be driven,
Til that thou be ayein at hir fro me?
Thou mayst answer, "a-byd, a-byd," but he
That hangeth by the nekke, sooth to seyne,
In grete disese abydeþ for the peyne.'
'Al esily, now, for the love of Marte,'
Quod Pandarus, 'for every thing hath tyme;
So longe abyd til that the night departe;
For al so siker as thou lyst here by me,
And god toforn, I wol be there at pryme,
And for thy werk somewhat as I shal seye,
Or on som other wight this charge leye.
For pardee, god wot, I have ever yit
Ben redy thee to serve, and to this night
Have I nought fayned, but emforth my wit
Don al thy lust, and shal with al my might.
Do now as I shal seye, and fare a-right;
And if thou nilt, wyte al thy-self thy care,
On me is nought along thyn yvel fare.
I woot wel that thou wyser art than I
A thousand fold, but if I were as thou,
God helpe me so, as I wolde outrely,
Right of myn owene hond, wryte hir right now
A lettre, in which I wolde hir tellen how
I ferde amis, and hir beseche of routh;
Now help thy-self, and leve it not for slouth.
And I my-self shal ther-with to hir goon;
And whan thou wost that I am with hir there,
Worth thou up-on a courser right anon,
Ye, hardily, right in thy beste gere,
And ryd forth by the place, as nought ne were,
And thou shalt finde us, if I may, sittinge
At som windowe, in-to the strete lokinge.
And if thee list, than maystow us saluwe,
And up-on me makë thy contenance;
But, by thy lyf, be war and faste eschuwe
To tarien ought, god shilde us fro mischaunce!
Ryd forth thy wey, and hold thy governaunce;
And we shal speke of thee som-what, I trowe,
Whan thou art goon, to do thyne eres glowe!
Touching thy lettre, thou art wys y-nough,
I woot thou nilt it digneliche endyte;
As make it with thise argumentes tough;
Ne scrivenish or craftily thou it wryte;
Beblotte it with thy teres eek a lyte;
And if thou wryte a goodly word al softe,
Though it be good, reherce it not to ofte.
For though the beste harpoun upon lyve
Wolde on the beste souned Ioly harpe
That ever was, with alle his fingres fyve,

Touche ay o streng, or ay o werbul harpe,
 Were his nayles poynted never so sharpe,
 It shulde maken every wight to dulle,
 To here his glee, and of his strokes fulle.
 Ne Iompre eek no discordaunt thing y-fere,
 As thus, to usen termes of phisyk;
 In loves termes, hold of thy matere
 The forme alwey, and do that it be lyk;
 For if a peyntour wolde peynte a pyk
 With asses feet, and hede it as an ape,
 It cordeth nought; so nere it but a Iape.'
 This counseyl lyked wel to Troilus;
 But, as a dreedful lover, he seyde this:—
 'Allas, my dere brother Pandarus,
 I am ashamed for to wryte, y-wis,
 Lest of myn innocence I seyde a-mis,
 Or that she nolde it for despyt receyve;
 Thanne were I deed, ther mighte it no-thing weyve.'
 To that Pandare answerde, 'if thee lest,
 Do that I seye, and lat me therwith goon;
 For by that lord that formed est and west,
 I hope of it to bringe answeere anon
 Right of hir hond, and if that thou nilt noon,
 Lat be; and sory mote he been his lyve,
 Ayeins thy lust that helpeth thee to thryve.'
 Quod Troilus, '*Depardieux*, I assente;
 Sin that thee list, I will aryse and wryte;
 And blisful god preye ich, with good entente,
 The vyage, and the lettre I shal endyte,
 So spede it; and thou, Minerva, the whyte,
 Yif thou me wit my lettre to devyse.'
 And sette him down, and wroot right in this wyse.—
 First he gan hir his righte lady calle,
 His hertes lyf, his lust, his sorwes leche,
 His blisse, and eek this othere termes alle,
 That in swich cas these loveres alle seche;
 And in ful humble wyse, as in his speche,
 He gan him recomaunde un-to hir grace;
 To telle al how, it axeth muchel space.
 And after this, ful lowly he hir prayde
 To be nought wrooth, though he, of his folye,
 So hardy was to hir to wryte, and seyde,
 That love it made, or elles moste he dye,
 And pitously gan mercy for to crye;
 And after that he seyde, and ley ful loude,
 Him-self was litel worth, and lesse he coude;
 And that she sholde han his conning excused,
 That litel was, and eek he dredde hir so,
 And his unworthinesse he ay acused;
 And after that, than gan he telle his wo;
 But that was endeles, with-outen ho;
 And seyde, he wolde in trouthe alwey him holde;—
 And radde it over, and gan the lettre folde.
 And with his salte teres gan he bathe
 The ruby in his signet, and it sette

Upon the wex deliverliche and rathe;
Ther-with a thousand tymes, er he lette,
He kiste tho the lettre that he shette,
And seyde, 'lettre, a blisful destenee
Thee shapen is, my lady shal thee see.'
This Pandare took the lettre, and that by tyme
A-morwe, and to his neces paleys sterte,
And faste he swoor, that it was passed pryme,
And gan to lape, and seyde, 'y-wis, myn herte,
So fresh it is, al-though it sore smerte,
I may not slepe never a Mayes morwe;
I have a Ioly wo, a lusty sorwe.'
Criseyde, whan that she hir uncle herde,
With dredful herte, and desirous to here
The cause of his cominge, thus answerde,
'Now by your feyth, myn uncle,' quod she, 'dere,
What maner windes gydeth yow now here?
Tel us your Ioly wo and your penaunce,
How ferforth be ye put in loves daunce.'
'By god,' quod he, 'I hoppe alwey bihinde!'
And she to-laugh, it thoughte hir herte breste.
Quod Pandarus, 'loke alwey that ye finde
Game in myn hood, but herkneth, if yow leste;
Ther is right now come in-to toun a geste,
A Greek espye, and telleth newe thinges,
For which come I to telle yow tydinges.
Into the gardin go we, and we shal here,
Al prevely, of this a long sermoun.'
With that they wenten arm in arm y-fere
In-to the gardin from the chaumbre doun.
And whan that he so fer was that the soun
Of that he speke, no man here mighte,
He seyde hir thus, and out the lettre plighte,
'Lo, he that is al hoolly youres free
Him recomaundeth lowly to your grace,
And sent to you this lettre here by me;
Avyseth you on it, whan ye han space,
And of som goodly answeere yow purchase;
Or, helpe me god, so pleynly for to seyne,
He may not longe liven for his peyne.'
Ful dredfully tho gan she stonde stille,
And took it nought, but al hir humble chere
Gan for to chaunge, and seyde, 'scrit ne bille,
For love of god, that toucheth swich matere,
Ne bring me noon; and also, uncle dere,
To myn estat have more reward, I preye,
Than to his lust; what sholde I more seye?
And loketh now if this be resonable,
And letteth nought, for favour ne for slouthe,
To seyn a sooth; now were it covenable
To myn estat, by god, and by your trouthe,
To taken it, or to han of him routhe,
In harming of my-self or in repreve?
Ber it a-yein, for him that ye on leve!'
This Pandarus gan on hir for to stare,

And seyde, 'now is this the grettest wonder
 That ever I sey! lat be this nyce fare!
 To deethe mote I smiten be with thonder,
 If, for the citee which that stondeth yonder,
 Wolde I a lettre un-to yow bringe or take
 To harm of yow; what list yow thus it make?
 But thus ye faren, wel neigh alle and some,
 That he that most desireth yow to serve,
 Of him ye recche leest wher he bcome,
 And whether that he live or elles sterve.
 But for al that that ever I may deserve,
 Refuse it nought,' quod he, and hente hir faste,
 And in hir bosom the lettre down he thraste,
 And seyde hir, 'now cast it away anoon,
 That folk may seen and gauren on us tweye.'
 Quod she, 'I can abyde til they be goon,'
 And gan to smyle, and seyde him, 'eem, I preye,
 Swich answeere as yow list your-self purveye,
 For trewely I nil no lettre wryte.'
 'No? than wol I,' quod he, 'so ye endyte.'
 Therwith she lough, and seyde, 'go we dyne.'
 And he gan at him-self to iape faste,
 And seyde, 'nece, I have so greet a pyne
 For love, that every other day I faste'—
 And gan his beste Iapes forth to caste;
 And made hir so to laughe at his folye,
 That she for laughter wende for to dye.
 And whan that she was comen in-to halle,
 'Now, eem,' quod she, 'we wol go dyne anoon;'
 And gan some of hir women to hir calle,
 And streygth in-to hir chaumbre gan she goon;
 But of hir businesses, this was oon
 A-monges othere thinges, out of drede,
 Ful prively this lettre for to rede;
 Avysed word by word in every lyne,
 And fond no lak, she thoughte he coude good;
 And up it putte, and went hir in to dyne.
 And Pandarus, that in a study stood,
 Er he was war, she took him by the hood,
 And seyde, 'ye were caught er that ye wiste;'
 'I vouche sauf,' quod he, 'do what yow liste.'
 Tho wesshen they, and sette hem down and ete;
 And after noon ful sleyly Pandarus
 Gan drawe him to the window next the strete,
 And seyde, 'nece, who hath arayed thus
 The yonder hous, that stant afor-yeyn us?'
 'Which hous?' quod she, and gan for to biholde,
 And knew it wel, and whos it was him tolde,
 And fillen forth in speche of thinges smale,
 And seten in the window bothe tweye.
 Whan Pandarus saw tyme un-to his tale,
 And saw wel that hir folk were alle awaye,
 'Now, nece myn, tel on,' quod he, 'I seye,
 How lyketh yow the lettre that ye woot?
 Can he ther-on? for, by my trouthe, I noot.'

Therwith al rosy hewed tho wex she,
And gan to humme, and seyde, 'so I trowe.'
'Aqyte him wel, for goddes love,' quod he;
'My-self to medes wol the lettre sowe,'
And held his hondes up, and sat on knowe,
'Now, goode nece, be it never so lyte,
Yif me the labour, it to sowe and plyte.'
'Ye, for I can so wryte,' quod she tho;
'And eek I noot what I sholde to him seye.'
'Nay, nece,' quod Pandare, 'sey not so;
Yet at the leste thanketh him, I preye,
Of his good wil, and doth him not to deye.
Now for the love of me, my nece dere,
Refuseth not at this tyme my preyere.'
'*Depar-dieux*,' quod she, 'god leve al be well!
God helpe me so, this is the firste lettre
That ever I wroot, ye, al or any del.'
And in-to a closet, for to avyse hir better,
She wente allone, and gan hir herte unfettre
Out of disdaynes prison but a lyte;
And sette hir doun, and gan a lettre wryte,
Of which to telle in short is myn entente
Theffect, as fer as I can understonde:—
She thonked him of al that he wel mente
Towardes hir, but holden him in honde
She nolde nought, ne make hir-selven bonde
In love, but as his suster, him to plese,
She wolde fayn, to doon his herte an ese.
She shette it, and to Pandarus gan goon,
There as he sat and loked in-to strete,
And doun she sette hir by him on a stoon
Of Iaspre, up-on a quissshin gold y-bete,
And seyde, 'as wisly helpe me god the grete,
I never dide a thing with more payne
Than wryte this, to which ye me constreyne,'
And took it him: he thonked hir and seyde,
'God woot, of thing ful ofte looth bigonne
Cometh ende good; and nece myn, Criseyde,
That ye to him of hard now ben y-wonne
Oughte he be glad, by god and yonder sonne!
For-why men seyth, "impressiounes lighte
Ful lightly been ay redy to the flighte."
But ye han pleyed tyraunt neigh to longe,
And hard was it your herte for to grave;
Now stint, that ye no longer on it honge,
Al wolde ye the forme of daunger save.
But hasteth yow to doon him Ioye have;
For trusteth wel, to longe y-doon hardnesse
Causeth despyt ful often, for distresse.'
And right as they declamed this matere,
Lo, Troilus, right at the stretes ende,
Com ryding with his tenthe some y-fere,
Al softly, and thiderward gan bende
Ther-as they sete, as was his way to wende
To paleys-ward; and Pandare him aspyde,

And seyde, 'nece, y-see who cometh here ryde!
 O flee not in, he seeth us, I suppose;
 Lest he may thinke that ye him eschuwe.'
 'Nay, nay,' quod she, and wex as reed as rose.
 With that he gan hir humbly to saluwe,
 With dreedful chere, and ofte his hewes muwe;
 And up his look debonairly he caste,
 And bekked on Pandare, and forth he paste.
 God woot if he sat on his hors a-right,
 Or goodly was beseyn, that ilke day!
 God woot wher he was lyk a manly knight!
 What sholde I drecche, or telle of his aray?
 Criseyde, which that alle these thinges say,
 To telle in short, hir lyked al y-fere,
 His persone, his aray, his look, his chere,
 His goodly manere and his gentillesse,
 So wel, that never, sith that she was born,
 Ne hadde she swich routhe of his distresse;
 And how-so she hath hard ben her-biforn,
 To god hope I, she hath now caught a thorn.
 She shal not pulle it out this nexte wyke;
 God sende mo swich thornes on to pyke!
 Pandare, which that stood hir faste by,
 Felte iren hoot, and he bigan to smyte,
 And seyde, 'nece, I pray yow hertely,
 Tel me that I shal axen yow a lyte.
 A womman, that were of his deeth to wyte,
 With-uten his gilt, but for hir lakked routhe,
 Were it wel doon?' Quod she, 'nay, by my trouthe!
 'God helpe me so,' quod he, 'ye sey me sooth.
 Ye felen wel your-self that I not lye;
 Lo, yond he rit!' Quod she, 'ye, so he dooth.'
 'Wel,' quod Pandare, 'as I have told yow thrye,
 Lat be your nyce shame and your folye,
 And spek with him in esing of his herte;
 Lat nycetee not do yow bothe smerte.'
 But ther-on was to heven and to done;
 Considered al thing, it may not be;
 And why, for shame; and it were eek to sone
 To graunten him so greet a libertee.
 'For playnly hir entente,' as seyde she,
 Was for to love him unwist, if she mighte,
 And guerdon him with no-thing but with sighte.'
 But Pandarus thoughte, 'it shal not be so,
 If that I may; this nyce opinioun
 Shal not be holden fully yeres two.'
 What sholde I make of this a long sermoun?
 He moste assente on that conclusioun
 As for the tyme; and whan that it was eve,
 And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.
 And on his wey ful faste homward he spedde,
 And right for loye he felte his herte daunce;
 And Troilus he fond alone a-bedde,
 That lay as dooth these loveres, in a traunce,
 Bitwixen hope and derk desesperaunce.

But Pandarus, right at his in-cominge,
He song, as who seyth, 'lo! sumwhat I bringe.'
And seyde, 'who is in his bed so sone
Y-buried thus?' 'It am I, freend,' quod he.
'Who, Troilus? nay helpe me so the mone,'
Quod Pandarus, 'thou shalt aryse and see
A charme that was sent right now to thee,
The which can helen thee of thyn accesse,
If thou do forth-with al thy besinesse.'
'Ye, through the might of god!' quod Troilus.
And Pandarus gan him the lettre take,
And seyde, 'pardee, god hath holpen us;
Have here a light, and loke on al this blake.'
But ofte gan the herte glade and quake
Of Troilus, whyl that he gan it rede,
So as the wordes yave him hope or drede.
But fynally, he took al for the beste
That she him wroot, for sumwhat he biheld
On which, him thoughte, he mighte his herte reste,
Al covered she the wordes under sheld.
Thus to the more worthy part he held,
That, what for hope and Pandarus biheste,
His grete wo for-yede he at the leste.
But as we may alday our-selven see,
Through more wode or col, the more fyr;
Right so encrees of hope, of what it be,
Therwith ful ofte encreseth eek desyr;
Or, as an ook cometh of a litel spyr,
So through this lettre, which that she him sente,
Encresen gan desyr, of which he brente.
Wherfore I seye alwey, that day and night
This Troilus gan to desiren more
Than he dide erst, thurgh hope, and dide his might
To pressen on, as by Pandarus lore,
And wryten to hir of his sorwes sore
Fro day to day; he leet it not refreyde,
That by Pandare he wroot somewhat or seyde;
And dide also his othere observaunces
That to a love-re longeth in this cas;
And, after that these dees turnede on chaunces,
So was he outhere glad or seyde 'allas!'
And held after his gestes ay his pas;
And aftir swiche answeres as he hadde,
So were his dayes sory outhere gladde.
But to Pandare alwey was his recours,
And pitously gan ay til him to pleyne,
And him bisoughte of rede and som socours;
And Pandarus, that sey his wode peyne,
Wex wel neigh deed for routhe, sooth to seyne,
And bisily with al his herte caste
Som of his wo to sleen, and that as faste;
And seyde, 'lord, and freend, and brother dere,
God woot that thy disese dooth me wo.
But woltow stinten al this woful chere,
And, by my trouthe, or it be dayes two,

And god to-forn, yet shal I shape it so,
 That thou shalt come in-to a certayn place,
 Ther-as thou mayst thy-self hir preye of grace.
 And certainly, I noot if thou it wost,
 But tho that been expert in love it seye,
 It is oon of the thinges that furthereth most,
 A man to have a leysen for to preye,
 And siker place his wo for to biwreye;
 For in good herte it moot som routhe impresse,
 To here and see the gilltes in distresse.
 Paraunter thenkestow: though it be so
 That kinde wolde doon hir to biginne
 To han a maner routhe up-on my wo,
 Seyth Daunger, "Nay, thou shalt me never winne;
 So reuleth hir hir hertes goost with-inne,
 That, though she bende, yet she stant on rote;
 What in effect is this un-to my bote?"
 Thenk here-ayeins, whan that the sturdy ook,
 On which men hakketh ofte, for the nones,
 Receyved hath the happy falling strook,
 The grete sweigh doth it come al at ones,
 As doon these rokkes or these milne-stones.
 For swifter cours cometh thing that is of wighte,
 Whan it descendeth, than don thinges lighte.
 And reed that boweth down for every blast,
 Ful lightly, cesse wind, it wol aryse;
 But so nil not an ook whan it is cast;
 It nedeth me nought thee longe to forbyse.
 Men shal reioysen of a greet empryse
 Acheved wel, and stant with-outen doute,
 Al han men been the lenger ther-about.
 But, Troilus, yet tel me, if thee lest,
 A thing now which that I shal axen thee;
 Which is thy brother that thou lovest best
 As in thy verray hertes privetee?'
 'Y-wis, my brother Deiphebus,' quod he.
 'Now,' quod Pandare, 'er houres twyes twelve,
 He shal thee ese, unwist of it him-selve.
 Now lat me allone, and werken as I may,'
 Quod he; and to Deiphebus wente he tho
 Which hadde his lord and grete freend ben ay;
 Save Troilus, no man he lovede so.
 To telle in short, with-outen wordes mo,
 Quod Pandarus, 'I pray yow that ye be
 Freend to a cause which that toucheth me.'
 'Yis, pardee,' quod Deiphebus, 'wel thow wost,
 In al that ever I may, and god to-fore,
 Al nere it but for man I love most,
 My brother Troilus; but sey wherfore
 It is; for sith that day that I was bore,
 I nas, ne never-mo to been I thinke,
 Ayeins a thing that mighte thee for-thinke.'
 Pandare gan him thonke, and to him seyde,
 'Lo, sire, I have a lady in this toun,
 That is my nece, and called is Criseyde,

Which som men wolden doon oppressioun,
And wrongfully have hir possessioun:
Wherfor I of your lordship yow biseche
To been our freend, with-oute more speche.'
Deiphebus him answerde, 'O, is not this,
That thou spekest of to me thus straungely,
Crisëyda, my freend?' He seyde, 'Yis.'
'Than nedeth,' quod Deiphebus hardely,
'Na-more to speke, for trusteth wel, that I
Wol be hir champioun with spore and yerde;
I roughte nought though alle hir foos it herde.
But tel me, thou that woost al this matere,
How I might best awaylen? now lat see.'
Quod Pandarus, 'if ye, my lord so dere,
Wolden as now don this honour to me,
To prayen hir to-morwe, lo, that she
Com un-to yow hir pleyntes to devyse,
Hir adversaries wolde of hit agryse.
And if I more dorste preye as now,
And chargen yow to have so greet travayle,
To han som of your bretheren here with yow,
That mighten to hir cause bet awayle,
Than, woot I wel, she mighte never fayle
For to be holpen, what at your instaunce,
What with hir othere freendes governaunce.'
Deiphebus, which that comen was, of kinde,
To al honour and bountee to consente,
Answerde, 'it shal be doon; and I can finde
Yet gretter help to this in myn entente.
What wolt thou seyn, if I for Eleyne sente
To speke of this? I trowe it be the beste;
For she may leden Paris as hir leste.
Of Ector, which that is my lord, my brother,
It nedeth nought to preye him freend to be;
For I have herd him, o tyme and eek other,
Speke of Criseyde swich honour, that he
May seyn no bet, swich hap to him hath she.
It nedeth nought his helpes for to crave;
He shal be swich, right as we wole him have.
Spek thou thy-self also to Troilus
On my bihalve, and pray him with us dyne.'
'Sire, al this shal be doon,' quod Pandarus;
And took his leve, and never gan to fyne,
But to his neces hous, as streyt as lyne,
He com; and fond hir fro the mete aryse;
And sette him doun, and spak right in this wyse.
He seyde, 'O veray god, so have I ronne!
Lo, nece myn, see ye nought how I swete?
I noot whether ye the more thank me conne.
Be ye nought war how that fals Poliphete
Is now aboute eft-sones for to plete,
And bringe on yow advocacyës newe?'
'I? no,' quod she, and chaunged al hir hewe.
'What is he more aboute, me to drecche
And doon me wrong? what shal I do, allas?

Yet of him-self no-thing ne wolde I recche,
 Nere it for Antenor and Eneas,
 That been his freendes in swich maner cas;
 But, for the love of god, myn uncle dere,
 No fors of that, lat him have al y-fere;
 With-outen that, I have ynough for us.'
 'Nay,' quod Pandare, 'it shal no-thing be so.
 For I have been right now at Deiphebus,
 And Ector, and myne othere lordes mo,
 And shortly maked eche of hem his fo;
 That, by my thrift, he shal it never winne
 For ought he can, whan that so he biginne.'
 And as they casten what was best to done,
 Deiphebus, of his owene curtasye,
 Com hir to preye, in his propre persone,
 To holde him on the morwe companye
 At diner, which she nolde not denye,
 But goodly gan to his preyere obeye.
 He thonked hir, and wente up-on his weye.
 Whanne this was doon, this Pandare up a-noon,
 To telle in short, and forth gan for to wende
 To Troilus, as stille as any stoon,
 And al this thing he tolde him, word and ende;
 And how that he Deiphebus gan to blende;
 And seyde him, 'now is tyme, if that thou conne,
 To bere thee wel to-morwe, and al is wonne.
 Now spek, now prey, now pitously compleyne;
 Lat not for nyce shame, or drede, or slouth;
 Som-tyme a man mot telle his owene peyne;
 Bileve it, and she shal han on thee routhe;
 Thou shalt be saved by thy feyth, in trouthe.
 But wel wot I, thou art now in a drede;
 And what it is, I leye, I can arede.
 Thow thinkest now, "how sholde I doon al this?
 For by my cheres mosten folk aspye,
 That for hir love is that I fare a-mis;
 Yet hadde I lever unwist for sorwe dye."
 Now thenk not so, for thou dost greet folye.
 For right now have I founden o manere
 Of sleighte, for to coveren al thy chere.
 Thow shall gon over night, and that as blyve,
 Un-to Deiphebus hous, as thee to pleye,
 Thy maladye a-wey the bet to dryve,
 For-why thou semest syk, soth for to seye.
 Sone after that, down in thy bed thee leye,
 And sey, thow mayst no lenger up endure,
 And lye right there, and byde thyn aventure.
 Sey that thy fever is wont thee for to take
 The same tyme, and lasten til a-morwe;
 And lat see now how wel thou canst it make,
 For, par-dee, syk is he that is in sorwe.
 Go now, farewell! and, Venus here to borwe,
 I hope, and thou this purpos holde ferme,
 Thy grace she shal fully ther conferme.'
 Quod Troilus, 'y-wis, thou nedelees

Counseylest me, that sykliche I me feyne!
For I am syk in earnest, doutelees,
So that wel neigh I sterve for the peyne.
Quod Pandarus, 'thou shalt the better pleyne,
And hast the lasse nede to countrefete;
For him men demen hoot that men seen swete.
Lo, holde thee at thy triste cloos, and I
Shal wel the deer un-to thy bowe dryve.'
Therwith he took his leve al softly,
And Troilus to paleys wente blyve.
So glad ne was he never in al his lyve;
And to Pandarus reed gan al assente,
And to Deiphebus hous at night he wente.
What nedeth yow to tellen al the chere
That Deiphebus un-to his brother made,
Or his accesse, or his syklych manere,
How men gan him with clothes for to lade,
Whan he was leyd, and how men wolde him glade?
But al for nought, he held forth ay the wyse
That ye han herd Pandare er this devyse.
But certeyn is, er Troilus him leyde,
Deiphebus had him prayed, over night,
To been a freend and helping to Criseyde.
God woot, that he it graunted anon-right,
To been hir fulle freend with al his might.
But swich a nede was to preye him thenne,
As for to bidde a wood man for to renne.
The morwen com, and neighen gan the tyme
Of meel-tyd, that the faire quene Eleyne
Shoop hir to been, an houre after the pryme,
With Deiphebus, to whom she nolde feyne;
But as his suster, hoonly, sooth to seyne,
She com to diner in hir playn entente.
But god and Pandare wiste al what this mente.
Come eek Criseyde, al innocent of this,
Antigone, hir sister Tarbe also;
But flee we now prolixitee best is,
For love of god, and lat us faste go
Right to the effect, with-oute tales mo,
Why al this folk assembled in this place;
And lat us of hir saluinges pace.
Gret honour dide hem Deiphebus, certeyn,
And fedde hem wel with al that mighte lyke.
But ever-more, 'allas!' was his refreyn,
'My goode brother Troilus, the syke,
Lyth yet'—and therwith-al he gan to syke;
And after that, he peyned him to glade
Hem as he mighte, and chere good he made.
Compleyned eek Eleyne of his syknesse
So feithfully, that pitee was to here,
And every wight gan waxen for accesse
A leche anon, and seyde, 'in this manere
Men curen folk; this charme I wol yow lere.'
But there sat oon, al list hir nought to teche,
That thoughte, best coude I yet been his leche.

After compleynt, him gonnen they to preyse,
 As folk don yet, whan som wight hath bigonne
 To preyse a man, and up with prys him reyse
 A thousand fold yet hyer than the sonne:—
 'He is, he can, that fewe lordes conne.'
 And Pandarus, of that they wolde afferme,
 He not for-gat hir preysing to conferme.
 Herde al this thing Criseyde wel y-nough,
 And every word gan for to notifie;
 For which with sobre chere hir herte lough;
 For who is that ne wolde hir glorifye,
 To mowen swich a knight don live or dye?
 But al passe I, lest ye to longe dwelle;
 For for o fyn is al that ever I telle.
 The tyme com, fro diner for to ryse,
 And, as hem oughthe, arisen everychoon,
 And gonne a while of this and that devyse.
 But Pandarus brak al this speche anoon,
 And seyde to Deiphebus, 'wole ye goon,
 If yourë wille be, as I yow preyde,
 To speke here of the nedes of Criseyde?'
 Eleyne, which that by the hond hir held,
 Took first the tale, and seyde, 'go we blyve;
 And goodly on Criseyde she biheld,
 And seyde, 'loves lat him never thryve,
 That dooth yow harm, and bringe him sone of lyve!
 And yeve me sorwe, but he shal it rewe,
 If that I may, and alle folk be trewe.'
 'Tel thou thy neces cas,' quod Deiphebus
 To Pandarus, 'for thou canst best it telle.'—
 'My lordes and my ladyes, it stant thus;
 What sholde I lenger,' quod he, 'do yow dwelle?'
 He rong hem out a proces lyk a belle,
 Up-on hir fo, that highte Poliphete,
 So hëynous, that men mighte on it spete.
 Answerde of this ech worse of hem than other,
 And Poliphete they gonnen thus to warien,
 'An-honged be swich oon, were he my brother;
 And so he shal, for it ne may not varien.'
 What sholde I lenger in this tale tarien?
 Pleynly, alle at ones, they hir highten,
 To been hir helpe in al that ever they mighten.
 Spak than Eleyne, and seyde, 'Pandarus,
 Woot ought my lord, my brother, this matere,
 I mene, Ector? or woot it Troilus?'
 He seyde, 'ye, but wole ye now me here?
 Me thinketh this, sith Troilus is here,
 It were good, if that ye wolde assente,
 She tolde hir-self him al this, er she wente.
 For he wole have the more hir grief at herte,
 By cause, lo, that she a lady is;
 And, by your leve, I wol but right in sterte,
 And do yow wite, and that anoon, y-wis,
 If that he slepe, or wole ought here of this.'
 And in he lepte, and seyde him in his ere,

'God have thy soule, y-brought have I thy bere!'
To smylen of this gan tho Troilus,
And Pandarus, with-oute rekeninge,
Out wente anoon to Eleyne and Deiphebus,
And seyde hem, 'so there be no taryinge,
Ne more pres, he wol wel that ye bringe
Crisëyda, my lady, that is here;
And as he may enduren, he wole here.
But wel ye woot, the chaumbre is but lyte,
And fewe folk may lightly make it warm;
Now loketh ye, (for I wol have no wyte,
To bringe in prees that mighte doon him harm
Or him disesen, for my bettre arm),
Wher it be bet she byde til eft-sones;
Now loketh ye, that knowen what to doon is.
I sey for me, best is, as I can knowe,
That no wight in ne wente but ye tweye,
But it were I, for I can, in a throwe,
Reherce hir cas, unlyk that she can seye;
And after this, she may him ones preye
To ben good lord, in short, and take hir leve;
This may not muchel of his ese him reve.
And eek, for she is straunge, he wol forbere
His ese, which that him thar nought for yow;
Eek other thing, that toucheth not to here,
He wol me telle, I woot it wel right now,
That secret is, and for the tounes prow.'
And they, that no-thing knewe of this entente,
With-oute more, to Troilus in they wente.
Eleyne in al hir goodly softe wyse,
Gan him saluwe, and womanly to pleye,
And seyde, 'ywis, ye moste alweyes aryse!
Now fayre brother, beth al hool, I preye!'
And gan hir arm right over his sholder leye,
And him with al hir wit to recomforte;
As she best coude, she gan him to disporte.
So after this quod she, 'we yow biseke,
My dere brother, Deiphebus, and I,
For love of god, and so doth Pandare eke,
To been good lord and freend, right hertely,
Un-to Criseyde, which that certainly
Receyveth wrong, as woot wel here Pandare,
That can hir cas wel bet than I declare.'
This Pandarus gan newe his tunge affyle,
And al hir cas reherce, and that anoon;
Whan it was seyd, sone after, in a whyle,
Quod Troilus, 'as sone as I may goon,
I wol right fayn with al my might ben oon,
Have god my trouthe, hir cause to sustene.'
'Good thrift have ye,' quod Eleyne the quene.
Quod Pandarus, 'and it your wille be,
That she may take hir leve, er that she go?'
'Or elles god for-bede,' tho quod he,
'If that she vouche sauf for to do so.'
And with that word quod Troilus, 'ye two,

Deiphebus, and my suster leef and dere,
 To yow have I to speke of o matere,
 To been avysed by your reed the better':—
 And fond, as hap was, at his beddes heed,
 The copie of a tretis and a lettre,
 That Ector hadde him sent to axen reed,
 If swich a man was worthy to ben deed,
 Woot I nought who; but in a grisly wyse
 He preyede hem anoon on it avyse.
 Deiphebus gan this lettre to unfolde
 In ernest greet; so dide Eleyne the quene;
 And rominge outward, fast it gan biholde,
 Downward a steyre, in-to an herber grene.
 This ilke thing they redden hem bi-twene;
 And largely, the mountaunce of an houre,
 They gonne on it to reden and to poure.
 Now lat hem rede, and turne we anoon
 To Pandarus, that gan ful faste pryde
 That al was wel, and out he gan to goon
 In-to the grete chambre, and that in hye,
 And seyde, 'god save al this companye!
 Com, nece myn; my lady quene Eleyne
 Abydeth yow, and eek my lordes tweyne.
 Rys, take with yow your nece Antigone,
 Or whom yow list, or no fors, hardily;
 The lasse prees, the bet; com forth with me,
 And loke that ye thonke humbly
 Hem alle three, and, whan ye may goodly
 Your tyme y-see, taketh of hem your leve,
 Lest we to longe his restes him bireve.'
 Al innocent of Pandarus entente,
 Quod tho Criseyde, 'go we, uncle dere';
 And arm in arm inward with him she wente,
 Avysed wel hir wordes and hir chere;
 And Pandarus, in ernestful manere,
 Seyde, 'alle folk, for goddes love, I preye,
 Stinteth right here, and softly yow pleye.
 Aviseth yow what folk ben here with-inne,
 And in what plyt oon is, god him amende!
 And inward thus ful softly biginne;
 Nece, I coniure and heighly yow defende,
 On his half, which that sowle us alle sende,
 And in the vertue of corounes tweyne,
 Slee nought this man, that hath for yow this peyne!
 Fy on the devel! thenk which oon he is,
 And in what plyt he lyth; com of anoon;
 Thenk al swich taried tyd, but lost it nis!
 That wol ye bothe seyn, whan ye ben oon.
 Secoundelich, ther yet devyneth noon
 Up-on yow two; com of now, if ye conne;
 Why! folk is blent, lo, al the tyme is wonne!
 In titiring, and pursuite, and delayes,
 The folk devyne at wagginge of a stree;
 And though ye wolde han after merye dayes,
 Than dar ye nought, and why? for she, and she

Spak swich a word; thus loked he, and he;
 Lest tyme I loste, I dar not with yow dele;
 Com of therfore, and bringeth him to hele.'
 But now to yow, ye lovers that ben here,
 Was Troilus nought in a cankedort,
 That lay, and mighte whispringe of hem here,
 And thoughte, 'O lord, right now renneth my sort
 Fully to dye, or han anoon comfort';
 And was the firste tyme he shulde hir preye
 Of love; O mighty god, what shal he seye?

Explicit Secundus Liber.

BOOK III.

Incipit Prohemium Tercii Libri.

O Blisful light, of whiche the bemes clere
 Adorneth al the thriddle hevene faire!
 O sonnes leef, O Loves doughter dere,
 Plesaunce of love, O goodly debonaire,
 In gentil hertes ay redy to repaire!
 O verray cause of hele and of gladnesse,
 Y-heried be thy might and thy goodnesse!
 In hevene and helle, in erthe and salte see
 Is felt thy might, if that I wel descerne;
 As man, brid, best, fish, herbe and grene tree
 Thee fele in tymes with vapour eterne.
 God loveth, and to love wol nought werne;
 And in this world no lyves creature,
 With-outen love, is worth, or may endure.
 Ye Loves first to thilke effectes glade,
 Thorugh which that thinges liven alle and be,
 Comeveden, and amorous him made
 On mortal thing, and as yow list, ay ye
 Yeve him in love ese or adversitee;
 And in a thousand formes doun him sente
 For love in erthe, and whom yow liste, he hente.
 Ye fierse Mars apeysen of his ire,
 And, as yow list, ye maken hertes digne;
 Algates, hem that ye wol sette a-fyre,
 They dreden shame, and vices they resigne;
 Ye do hem corteys be, fresshe and benigne,
 And hye or lowe, after a wight entendeth;
 The Ioyes that he hath, your might him sendeth.
 Ye holden regne and hous in unitee;
 Ye soothfast cause of frendship been also;
 Ye knowe al thilke covered qualitee
 Of thinges which that folk on wondren so,
 Whan they can not construe how it may io,
 She loveth him, or why he loveth here;
 As why this fish, and nought that, cometh to were.
 Ye folk a lawe han set in universe,
 And this knowe I by hem that loveres be,
 That who-so stryveth with yow hath the werse:
 Now, lady bright, for thy benignitee,
 At reverence of hem that serven thee,

Whos clerk I am, so techeth me devyse
 Som Ioye of that is felt in thy servyse.
 Ye in my naked herte sentement
 Inhelde, and do me shewe of thy swetnesse.—
 Caliope, thy vois be now present,
 For now is nede; sestow not my destresse,
 How I mot telle anon-right the gladnesse
 Of Troilus, to Venus heryinge?
 To which gladnes, who nede hath, god him bringe!

Explicit prohemium Tercii Libri.

Incipit Liber Tercius.

Lay al this mene whyle Troilus,
 Recordinge his lessoun in this manere,
 'Ma fey!' thought he, 'thus wole I seye and thus;
 Thus wole I pleyne un-to my lady dere;
 That word is good, and this shal be my chere;
 This nil I not foryeten in no wyse.'
 God leve him werken as he gan devyse.
 And lord, so that his herte gan to quappe,
 Heringe hir come, and shorte for to syke!
 And Pandarus, that ladde hir by the lappe,
 Com ner, and gan in at the curtin pyke,
 And seyde, 'god do bote on alle syke!
 See, who is here yow comen to visyte;
 Lo, here is she that is your deeth to wyte.'
 Ther-with it semed as he wepte almost;
 'A ha,' quod Troilus so rewfully,
 'Wher me be wo, O mighty god, thou wost!
 Who is al there? I see nought trewely.'
 'Sire,' quod Criseyde, 'it is Pandare and I.'
 'Ye, swete herte? allas, I may nought ryse
 To knele, and do yow honour in som wyse.'
 And dressede him upward, and she right tho
 Gan bothe here hondes softe upon him leye,
 'O, for the love of god, do ye not so
 To me,' quod she, 'ey! what is this to seye?
 Sire, come am I to yow for causes tweye;
 First, yow to thonke, and of your lordshipe eke
 Continuaunce I wolde yow biseke.'
 This Troilus, that herde his lady preye
 Of lordship him, wex neither quik ne deed,
 Ne mighte a word for shame to it seye,
 Al-though men sholde smyten of his heed.
 But lord, so he wex sodeinliche reed,
 And sire, his lesson, that he wende conne,
 To preyen hir, is thurgh his wit y-ronne.
 Cryseyde al this aspyede wel y-nough,
 For she was wys, and lovede him never-the-lasse,
 Al nere he malapert, or made it tough,
 Or was to bold, to singe a fool a masse.
 But whan his shame gan somewhat to passe,
 His resons, as I may my rymes holde,
 I yow wol telle, as techen bokes olde.
 In chaunged vois, right for his verrey drede,
 Which vois eek quook, and ther-to his manere

Goodly abayst, and now his hewes rede,
Now pale, un-to Criseyde, his lady dere,
With look doun cast and humble yolden chere,
Lo, the alderfirste word that him asterte
Was, twyes, 'mercy, mercy, swete herte!'
And stinte a whyl, and whan he mighte out-bringe,
The nexte word was, 'god wot, for I have,
As feythfully as I have had konninge,
Ben youre, also god my sowle save;
And shal, til that I, woful wight, be grave.
And though I dar ne can un-to yow pleyne,
Y-wis, I suffre nought the lasse peyne.
Thus mucche as now, O wommanliche wyf,
I may out-bringe, and if this yow displese,
That shal I wreke upon myn owne lyf
Right sone, I trowe, and doon your herte an ese,
If with my deeth your herte I may apese.
But sin that ye han herd me som-what seye,
Now recche I never how sone that I deye.'
Ther-with his manly sorwe to biholde,
It mighte han maad an herte of stoon to rewe;
And Pandare weep as he to watre wolde,
And poked ever his nece newe and newe,
And seyde, 'wo bigon ben hertes trewe!
For love of god, make of this thing an ende,
Or slee us bothe at ones, er that ye wende.'
'I? what?' quod she, 'by god and by my trouthe,
I noot nought what ye wilne that I seye.'
'I? what?' quod he, 'that ye han on him routhe,
For goddes love, and doth him nought to deye.'
'Now thanne thus,' quod she, 'I wolde him preyre
To telle me the fyn of his entente;
Yet wiste I never wel what that he mente.'
'What that I mene, O swete herte dere?'
Quod Troilus, 'O goodly fresshe free!
That, with the stremes of your eyen clere,
Ye wolde som-tyme freendly on me see,
And thanne agreen that I may ben he,
With-oute braunche of vyce in any wyse,
In trouthe alwey to doon yow my servyse
As to my lady right and chief resort,
With al my wit and al my diligence,
And I to han, right as yow list, comfort,
Under your yerde, egal to myn offence,
As deeth, if that I breke your defence;
And that ye deigne me so mucche honoure,
Me to comaunden ought in any houre.
And I to ben your verray humble trewe,
Secret, and in my paynes pacient,
And ever-mo desire freshly newe,
To serven, and been y-lyke ay diligent,
And, with good herte, al holly your talent
Receyven wel, how sore that me smerte,
Lo, this mene I, myn owene swete herte.'
Quod Pandarus, 'lo, here an hard request,

And resonable, a lady for to werne!
 Now, nece myn, by natal loves fest,
 Were I a god, ye sholde sterve as yerne,
 That heren wel, this man wol no-thing yerne
 But your honour, and seen him almost sterve,
 And been so looth to suffren him yow serve.'
 With that she gan hir eyen on him caste
 Ful esily, and ful debonairly,
 Avysing hir, and hyed not to faste
 With never a word, but seyde him softly,
 'Myn honour sauf, I wol wel trewely,
 And in swich forme as he can now devyse,
 Receyven him fully to my servyse,
 Biseching him, for goddes love, that he
 Wolde, in honour of trouthe and gentillesse,
 As I wel mene, eek mene wel to me,
 And myn honour, with wit and besinesse,
 Ay kepe; and if I may don him gladnesse,
 From hennes-forth, y-wis, I nil not feyne:
 Now beeth al hool, no lenger ye ne pleyne.
 But nathelees, this warne I yow,' quod she,
 'A kinges sone al-though ye be, y-wis,
 Ye shul na-more have soverainetee
 Of me in love, than right in that cas is;
 Ne I nil forbere, if that ye doon a-mis,
 To wrathen yow; and whyl that ye me serve,
 Cherycen yow right after ye deserve.
 And shortly, derë herte and al my knight,
 Beth glad, and draweth yow to lustinesse,
 And I shal trewely, with al my might,
 Your bittre tornen al in-to swetnesse;
 If I be she that may yow do gladnesse,
 For every wo ye shal recovere a blisse';
 And him in armes took, and gan him kisse.
 Fil Pandarus on knees, and up his yën
 To hevene threw, and held his hondes hye,
 'Immortal god!' quod he, 'that mayst nought dyen,
 Cupide I mene, of this mayst glorifye;
 And Venus, thou mayst make melodye;
 With-uten hond, me semeth that in towne,
 For this merveyle, I here ech belle sowne.
 But ho! no more as now of this matere,
 For-why this folk wol comen up anoon,
 That han the lettre red; lo, I hem here.
 But I coniure thee, Criseyde, and oon,
 And two, thou Troilus, whan thou mayst goon,
 That at myn hous ye been at my warninge,
 For I ful wel shal shape your cominge;
 And eseth ther your hertes right y-nough;
 And lat see which of yow shal bere the belle
 To speke of love a-right!' ther-with he lough,
 'For ther have ye a layser for to telle.'
 Quod Troilus, 'how longe shal I dwelle
 Er this be doon?' Quod he, 'whan thou mayst ryse,
 This thing shal be right as I yow devyse.'

With that Eleyne and also Deiphebus
Tho comen upward, right at the steyses ende;
And lord, so than gan grone Troilus,
His brother and his suster for to blende.
Quod Pandarus, 'it tyme is that we wende;
Tak, nece myn, your leve at alle three,
And lat hem speke, and cometh forth with me.'
She took hir leve at hem ful thriftily,
As she wel coude, and they hir reverence
Un-to the fulle didn hardely,
And speken wonder wel, in hir absence,
Of hir, in preysing of hir excellence,
Hir governaunce, hir wit; and hir manere
Commendeden, it loye was to here.
Now lat hir wende un-to hir owne place,
And torne we to Troilus a-yein,
That gan ful lightly of the lettre passe,
That Deiphebus hadde in the gardin seyn.
And of Eleyne and him he wolde fayn
Delivered been, and seyde, that him leste
To slepe, and after tales have reste.
Eleyne him kiste, and took hir leve blyve,
Deiphebus eek, and hoom wente every wight;
And Pandarus, as faste as he may dryve,
To Troilus tho com, as lyne right;
And on a paillet, al that glade night,
By Troilus he lay, with mery chere,
To tale; and wel was hem they were y-fere.
Whan every wight was voided but they two,
And alle the dores were faste y-shette,
To telle in short, with-oute wordes mo,
This Pandarus, with-uten any lette,
Up roos, and on his beddes syde him sette,
And gan to speken in a sobre wyse
To Troilus, as I shal yow devyse.
'Myn alderlevest lord, and brother dere,
God woot, and thou, that it sat me so sore,
When I thee saw so languisshing to-yere,
For love, of which thy wo wex alwey more;
That I, with al my might and al my lore,
Have ever sithen doon my bisnesse
To bringe thee to loye out of distresse;
And have it brought to swich plyt as thou wost,
So that, thorough me, thou stondest now in weye
To fare wel, I seye it for no bost,
And wostow why? for shame it is to seye,
For thee have I bigonne a gamen pleye
Which that I never doon shal eft for other,
Al-though he were a thousand fold my brother.
That is to seye, for thee am I bicomene,
Bitwixen game and ernest, swich a mene
As maken wommen un-to men to comen;
Al sey I nought, thou wost wel what I mene.
For thee have I my nece, of vyces clene,
So fully maad thy gentillesse triste,

That al shal been right as thy-selve liste.
 But god, that al wot, take I to witnesse,
 That never I this for coveityse wroughte,
 But only for to abregge that distresse,
 For which wel nygh thou deydest, as me thoughte.
 But gode brother, do now as thee oughte,
 For goddes love, and keep hir out of blame,
 Sin thou art wys, and save alwey hir name.
 For wel thou wost, the name as yet of here
 Among the peple, as who seyth, halwed is;
 For that man is unbore, I dar wel swere,
 That ever wiste that she dide amis.
 But wo is me, that I, that cause al this,
 May thenken that she is my nece dere,
 And I hir eem, and traytor eek y-fere!
 And were it wist that I, through myn engyn,
 Hadde in my nece y-put this fantasye,
 To do thy lust, and hoolly to be thyn,
 Why, al the world up-on it wolde crye,
 And seye, that I the worste trecherye
 Dide in this cas, that ever was bigonne,
 And she for-lost, and thou right nought y-wonne.
 Wher-fore, er I wol ferther goon a pas,
 Yet eft I thee biseche and fully seye,
 That privetee go with us in this cas,
 That is to seye, that thou us never wreye;
 And be nought wrooth, though I thee ofte preyre
 To holden secree swich an heigh matere;
 For skilful is, thow wost wel, my preyere.
 And thenk what wo ther hath bitid er this,
 For makinge of avauntes, as men rede;
 And what mischaunce in this world yet ther is,
 Fro day to day, right for that wikked dede;
 For which these wyse clerkes that ben dede
 Han ever yet proverbed to us yonge,
 That "firste vertu is to kepe tonge."
 And, nere it that I wilne as now tabregge
 Diffusioun of speche, I coude almost
 A thousand olde stories thee alegge
 Of wommen lost, thorough fals and foles bost;
 Proverbes canst thy-self y-nowe, and wost,
 Ayeins that vyce, for to been a labbe,
 Al seyde men sooth as often as they gabbe.
 O tonge, allas! so often here-biforn
 Hastow made many a lady bright of hewe
 Seyd, "welawey! the day that I was born!"
 And many a maydes sorwes for to newe;
 And, for the more part, al is untrewre
 That men of yelpe, and it were brought to preve;
 Of kinde non avauntour is to leve.
 Avauntour and a lyere, al is on;
 As thus: I pose, a womman graunte me
 Hir love, and seyth that other wol she non,
 And I am sworn to holden it secree,
 And after I go telle it two or three;

Y-wis, I am avauntour at the leste,
And lyere, for I breke my biheste.
Now loke thanne, if they be nought to blame,
Swich maner folk; what shal I clepe hem, what,
That hem avaunte of wommen, and by name,
That never yet bihighte hem this ne that,
Ne knewe hem more than myn olde hat?
No wonder is, so god me sende hele,
Though wommen drede with us men to dele.
I sey not this for no mistrust of yow,
Ne for no wys man, but for foles nyce,
And for the harm that in the world is now,
As wel for foly ofte as for malyce;
For wel wot I, in wyse folk, that vyce
No womman drat, if she be wel avysed;
For wyse ben by foles harm chastysed.
But now to purpos; leve brother dere,
Have al this thing that I have seyde in minde,
And keep thee clos, and be now of good chere,
For at thy day thou shalt me trewe finde.
I shal thy proces sette in swich a kinde,
And god to-forn, that it shall thee suffyse,
For it shal been right as thou wolt devyse.
For wel I woot, thou menest wel, parde;
Therfore I dar this fully undertake.
Thou wost eek what thy lady graunted thee,
And day is set, the chartres up to make.
Have now good night, I may no lenger wake;
And bid for me, sin thou art now in blisse,
That god me sende deeth or sone lisse.’
Who mighte telle half the Ioye or feste
Which that the sowle of Troilus tho felte,
Heringe theeffect of Pandarus biheste?
His olde wo, that made his herte swelte,
Gan tho for Ioye wasten and to-melte,
And al the richesse of his sykes sore
At ones fledde, he felte of hem no more.
But right so as these holtes and these hayes,
That han in winter dede been and dreye,
Revesten hem in grene, whan that May is,
Whan every lusty lyketh best to pleye:
Right in that selve wyse, sooth to seye,
Wex sodeynliche his herte ful of Ioye,
That gladder was ther never man in Troye.
And gan his look on Pandarus up caste
Ful sobrelly, and frendly for to see,
And seyde, ’freend, in Aprille the laste,
As wel thou wost, if it remembre thee,
How neigh the deeth for wo thou founde me;
And how thou didest al thy bisnesse
To knowe of me the cause of my distresse.
Thou wost how longe I it for-bar to seye
To thee, that art the man that I best triste;
And peril was it noon to thee by-wreye,
That wiste I wel; but tel me, if thee liste,

Sith I so looth was that thy-self it wiste,
 How dorste I mo tellen of this matere,
 That quake now, and no wight may us here?
 But natheles, by that god I thee swere,
 That, as him list, may al this world governe,
 And, if I lye, Achilles with his spere
 Myn herte cleve, al were my lyf eterne,
 As I am mortal, if I late or yerne
 Wolde it biwreye, or dorste, or sholde conne,
 For al the good that god made under sonne;
 That rather deye I wolde, and determyne,
 As thinketh me, now stokked in presoun,
 In wrecchednesse, in filthe, and in vermyne,
 Caytif to cruel king Agamenoun;
 And this, in alle the temples of this toun,
 Upon the goddes alle, I wol thee swere,
 To-morwe day, if that thee lyketh here.
 And that thou hast so muche y-doon for me,
 That I ne may it never-more deserve,
 This knowe I wel, al mighte I now for thee
 A thousand tymes on a morwen sterve,
 I can no more, but that I wol thee serve
 Right as thy slave, whider-so thou wende,
 For ever-more, un-to my lyves ende!
 But here, with al myn herte, I thee biseche,
 That never in me thou deme swich folye
 As I shal seyn; me thoughte, by thy speche,
 That this, which thou me dost for companye,
 I sholde wene it were a bauderye;
 I am nought wood, al-if I lewed be;
 It is not so, that wool I wel, pardee.
 But he that goth, for gold or for richesse,
 On swich message, calle him what thee list;
 And this that thou dost, calle it gentilesse,
 Compassioun, and felawship, and trist;
 Departe it so, for wyde-where is wist
 How that there is dyversitee requered
 Bitwixen thinges lyke, as I have lered.
 And, that thou knowe I thenke nought ne wene
 That this servyse a shame be or lape,
 I have my faire suster Polixene,
 Cassandre, Eleyne, or any of the frape;
 Be she never so faire or wel y-shape,
 Tel me, which thou wilt of everichone,
 To han for thyn, and lat me thanne allone.
 But sin that thou hast don me this servyse,
 My lyf to save, and for noon hope of mede,
 So, for the love of god, this grete empryse
 Parforme it out; for now is moste nede.
 For high and low, with-outen any drede,
 I wol alwey thyne hestes alle kepe;
 Have now good night, and lat us bothe slepe.
 Thus held him ech with other wel apayed,
 That al the world ne mighte it bet amende;
 And, on the morwe, whan they were arayed,

Ech to his owene nedes gan entende.
But Troilus, though as the fyr he brende
For sharp desyr of hope and of plesaunce,
He not for-gat his gode governaunce.
But in him-self with manhod gan restreyne
Ech rakel dede and ech unbrydled chere,
That alle tho that liven, sooth to seyne,
Ne sholde han wist, by word or by manere,
What that he mente, as touching this matere.
From every wight as fer as is the cloude
He was, so wel dissimulen he coude.
And al the whyl which that I yow devyse,
This was his lyf; with al his fulle might,
By day he was in Martes high servyse,
This is to seyn, in armes as a knight;
And for the more part, the longe night
He lay, and thoughte how that he mighte serve
His lady best, hir thank for to deserve.
Nil I nought swerë, al-though he lay softe,
That in his thought he nas sumwhat disesed,
Ne that he tornede on his pilwes ofte,
And wolde of that him missed han ben sesed;
But in swich cas man is nought alwey plesed,
For ought I wot, no more than was he;
That can I deme of possibilitee.
But certeyn is, to purpos for to go,
That in this whyle, as writen is in geste,
He say his lady som-tyme; and also
She with him spak, whan that she dorste or leste,
And by hir bothe avys, as was the beste,
Apoynteden ful warly in this nede,
So as they dorste, how they wolde procede.
But it was spoken in so short a wyse,
In swich awayt alwey, and in swich fere,
Lest any wyght divynen or devyse
Wolde of hem two, or to it leye an ere,
That al this world so leef to hem ne were
As that Cupido wolde hem grace sende
To maken of hir speche aright an ende.
But thilke litel that they speke or wroughte,
His wyse goost took ay of al swich hede,
It semed hir, he wiste what she thoughte
With-outen word, so that it was no nede
To bidde him ought to done, or ought for-bede;
For which she thoughte that love, al come it late,
Of alle Ioye hadde opned hir the yate.
And shortly of this proces for to pace,
So wel his werk and wordes he bisette,
That he so ful stood in his lady grace,
That twenty thousand tymes, or she lette,
She thonked god she ever with him mette;
So coude he him governe in swich servyse,
That al the world ne mighte it bet devyse.
For-why she fond him so discreet in al,
So secret, and of swich obëisaunce,

That wel she felte he was to hir a wal
 Of steel, and sheld from every displesaunce;
 That, to ben in his gode governaunce,
 So wys he was, she was no more afered,
 I mene, as fer as oughthe ben requered.
 And Pandarus, to quike alwey the fyr,
 Was ever y-lyke prest and diligent;
 To ese his frend was set al his desyr.
 He shof ay on, he to and fro was sent;
 He lettres bar whan Troilus was absent.
 That never man, as in his freendes nede,
 Ne bar him bet than he, with-outen drede.
 But now, paraunter, som man wayten wolde
 That every word, or sonde, or look, or chere
 Of Troilus that I rehersen sholde,
 In al this whyle, un-to his lady dere;
 I trowe it were a long thing for to here;
 Or of what wight that stant in swich disioynte,
 His wordes alle, or every look, to poynte.
 For sothe, I have not herd it doon er this,
 In storye noon, ne no man here, I wene;
 And though I wolde I coude not, y-wis;
 For ther was som epistel hem bitwene,
 That wolde, as seyth myn auctor, wel contene
 Neigh half this book, of which him list not wryte;
 How sholde I thanne a lyne of it endyte?
 But to the grete effect: than sey I thus,
 That standing in concord and in quiete
 Thise ilke two, Criseyde and Troilus,
 As I have told, and in this tyme swete,
 Save only often mighte they not mete,
 Ne layser have hir speches to fulfelle,
 That it befel right as I shal yow telle,
 That Pandarus, that ever dide his might
 Right for the fyn that I shal speke of here,
 As for to bringe to his hous som night
 His faire nece, and Troilus y-fere,
 Wher-as at leyser al this heigh matere,
 Touching hir love, were at the fulle up-bounde,
 Hadde out of doute a tyme to it founde.
 For he with greet deliberacioun
 Hadde every thing that her-to mighte avayle
 Forn-cast, and put in execucioun,
 And neither laft, for cost ne for travayle;
 Come if hem lest, hem sholde no-thing fayle;
 And for to been in ought espyed there,
 That, wiste he wel, an impossible were.
 Dredelees, it cleer was in the wind
 Of every pye and every lette-game;
 Now al is wel, for al the world is blind
 In this matere, bothe fremed and tame.
 This timber is al redy up to frame;
 Us lakketh nought but that we witen wolde
 A certain houre, in whiche she comen sholde.
 And Troilus, that al this purveyaunce

Knew at the fulle, and waytede on it ay,
Hadde here-up-on eek made gret ordenaunce,
And founde his cause, and ther-to his aray,
If that he were missed, night or day,
Ther-whyle he was aboute this servyse,
That he was goon to doon his sacrifyse,
And moste at swich a temple alone wake,
Answered of Appollo for to be;
And first, to seen the holy laurer quake,
Er that Apollo spak out of the tree,
To telle him next whan Grekes sholden flee,
And forthy lette him no man, god forbede,
But preye Apollo helpen in this nede.
Now is ther litel more for to done,
But Pandare up, and shortly for to seyne,
Right sone upon the chaunging of the mone,
Whan lightles is the world a night or tweyne,
And that the welken shoop him for to reyne,
He streight a-morwe un-to his nece wente;
Ye han wel herd the fyn of his entente.
Whan he was come, he gan anoon to pleye
As he was wont, and of him-self to lape;
And fynally, he swor and gan hir seye,
By this and that, she sholde him not escape,
Ne lengere doon him after hir to gape;
But certeynly she moste, by hir leve,
Come soupen in his hous with him at eve.
At whiche she lough, and gan hir faste excuse,
And seyde, 'it rayneth; lo, how sholde I goon?'
'Lat be,' quod he, 'ne stond not thus to muse;
This moot be doon, ye shal be ther anoon.'
So at the laste her-of they felle at oon,
Or elles, softe he swor hir in hir ere,
He nolde never come ther she were.
Sone after this, to him she gan to rowne,
And asked him if Troilus were there?
He swor hir, 'nay, for he was out of towne,'
And seyde, 'nece, I pose that he were,
Yow thurfte never have the more fere.
For rather than men mighte him ther aspye,
Me were lever a thousand-fold to dye.'
Nought list myn auctor fully to declare
What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
That Troilus was out of town y-fare,
As if he seyde ther-of sooth or no;
But that, with-out awayt, with him to go,
She graunted him, sith he hir that bisoughte,
And, as his nece, obeyed as hir oughte.
But nathelees, yet gan she him biseche,
Al-though with him to goon it was no fere,
For to be war of goosish peples speche,
That dremen thinges whiche that never were,
And wel avyse him whom he broughte there;
And seyde him, 'eem, sin I mot on yow triste,
Loke al be wel, and do now as yow liste.'

He swor hir, 'yis, by stokkes and by stones,
 And by the goddes that in hevene dwelle,
 Or elles were him lever, soule and bones,
 With Pluto king as depe been in helle
 As Tantalus!' What sholde I more telle?
 Whan al was wel, he roos and took his leve,
 And she to souper com, whan it was eve,
 With a certayn of hir owene men,
 And with hir faire nece Antigone,
 And othere of hir wommen nyne or ten;
 But who was glad now, who, as trowe ye,
 But Troilus, that stood and mighte it see
 Thurgh-out a litel windowe in a stewe,
 Ther he bishet, sin midnight, was in mewe,
 Unwist of every wight but of Pandare?
 But to the poynt; now whan she was y-come
 With alle Ioye, and alle frendes fare,
 Hir eem anoon in armes hath hir nome,
 And after to the souper, alle and some,
 Whan tyme was, ful softe they hem sette;
 God wot, ther was no deyntee for to fette.
 And after souper gonnen they to ryse,
 At ese wel, with hertes fresshe and glade,
 And wel was him that coude best devyse
 To lyken hir, or that hir laughen made.
 He song; she pleyde; he tolde tale of Wade.
 But at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
 She took hir leve, and nedes wolde wende.
 But O, Fortune, executrice of wierdes,
 O influences of thise hevenes hye!
 Soth is, that, under god, ye ben our hierdes,
 Though to us bestes been the causes wrye.
 This mene I now, for she gan hoomward hye,
 But execut was al bisyde hir leve,
 At the goddes wil; for which she moste bleve.
 The bente mone with hir hornes pale,
 Saturne, and Iove, in Cancro ioyned were,
 That swich a rayn from hevene gan avale,
 That every maner womman that was there
 Hadde of that smoky reyn a verray fere;
 At which Pandare tho lough, and seyde thenne,
 'Now were it tyme a lady to go henne!
 But goode nece, if I mighte ever plese
 Yow any-thing, than prey I yow,' quod he,
 'To doon myn herte as now so greet an ese
 As for to dwelle here al this night with me,
 For-why this is your owene hous, pardee.
 For, by my trouthe, I sey it nought a-game,
 To wende as now, it were to me a shame.'
 Criseyde, whiche that coude as mucche good
 As half a world, tok hede of his preyere;
 And sin it ron, and al was on a flood,
 She thoughte, as good chep may I dwellen here,
 And graunte it gladly with a freendes chere,
 And have a thank, as grucche and thanne abyde;

For hoom to goon it may nought wel bityde.
'I wol,' quod she, 'myn uncle leef and dere,
Sin that yow list, it skile is to be so;
I am right glad with yow to dwellen here;
I seyde but a-game, I wolde go.'
'Y-wis, graunt mercy, nece!' quod he tho;
'Were it a game or no, soth for to telle,
Now am I glad, sin that yow list to dwelle.'
Thus al is wel; but tho bigan aright
The newe Ioye, and al the feste agayn;
But Pandarus, if goodly hadde he might,
He wolde han hyed hir to bedde fayn,
And seyde, 'lord, this is an huge rayn!
This were a weder for to slepen inne;
And that I rede us sone to biginne.
And nece, woot ye wher I wol yow leye,
For that we shul not liggen fer asonder,
And for ye neither shullen, dar I seye,
Heren noise of reynes nor of thondre?
By god, right in my lyte closet yonder.
And I wol in that outer hous allone
Be wardeyn of your wommen everichone.
And in this middel chaumbre that ye see
Shul youre wommen slepen wel and softe;
And ther I seyde shal your-selve be;
And if ye liggen wel to-night, com ofte,
And careth not what weder is on-lofte.
The wyn anon, and whan so that yow leste,
So go we slepe, I trowe it be the beste.'
Ther nis no more, but here-after sone,
The voydè dronke, and travers drawe anon,
Gan every wight, that hadde nought to done
More in that place, out of the chaumber gon.
And ever-mo so sternelich it ron,
And blew ther-with so wonderliche loude,
That wel neigh no man heren other coude.
Tho Pandarus, hir eem, right as him oughte,
With women swiche as were hir most aboute,
Ful glad un-to hir beddes syde hir broughte,
And toke his leve, and gan ful lowe loute,
And seyde, 'here at this closet-dore with-oute,
Right over-thwart, your wommen liggen alle,
That, whom yow liste of hem, ye may here calle.'
So whan that she was in the closet leyd,
And alle hir wommen forth by ordenaunce
A-bedde weren, ther as I have seyd,
There was no more to skippen nor to traunce,
But boden go to bedde, with mischaunce,
If any wight was steringe any-where,
And late hem slepe that a-bedde were.
But Pandarus, that wel coude eche a del
The olde daunce, and every poynt ther-inne,
Whan that he sey that alle thing was wel,
He thoughte he wolde up-on his werk biginne,
And gan the stewe-dore al softe un-pinne,

And stille as stoon, with-uten lenger lette,
 By Troilus a-doun right he him sette.
 And, shortly to the poynt right for to gon,
 Of al this werk he tolde him word and ende,
 And seyde, 'make thee redy right anon,
 For thou shalt in-to hevene blisse wende.'
 'Now blisful Venus, thou me grace sende,'
 Quod Troilus, 'for never yet no nede
 Hadde I er now, ne halvendel the drede.'
 Quod Pandarus, 'ne drede thee never a del,
 For it shal been right as thou wilt desyre;
 So thryve I, this night shal I make it wel,
 Or casten al the gruwel in the fyre.'
 'Yit blisful Venus, this night thou me enspyre,'
 Quod Troilus, 'as wis as I thee serve,
 And ever bet and bet shal, til I sterve.
 And if I hadde, O Venus ful of murthe,
 Aspectes badde of Mars or of Saturne,
 Or thou combust or let were in my birthe,
 Thy fader prey al thilke harm disturne
 Of grace, and that I glad ayein may turne,
 For love of him thou lovedest in the shawe,
 I mene Adoon, that with the boor was slawe.
 O Iove eek, for the love of faire Europe,
 The whiche in forme of bole away thou fette;
 Now help, O Mars, thou with thy bloody cope,
 For love of Cipris, thou me nought ne lette;
 O Phebus, thenk whan Dane hir-selven shette
 Under the bark, and laurer wex for drede,
 Yet for hir love, O help now at this nede!
 Mercurie, for the love of Hiersè eke,
 For which Pallas was with Aglauros wrooth,
 Now help, and eek Diane, I thee biseke,
 That this viage be not to thee looth.
 O fatal sustren, which, er any clooth
 Me shapen was, my destenè me sponne,
 So helpeth to this werk that is bi-gonne!'

Quod Pandarus, 'thou wrecched mouses herte,
 Art thou agast so that she wol thee byte?
 Why, don this furred cloke up-on thy sherte,
 And folowe me, for I wol han the wyte;
 But byd, and lat me go bifore a lyte.'
 And with that word he gan un-do a trappe,
 And Troilus he broughte in by the lappe.
 The sterne wind so loude gan to route
 That no wight other noyse mighte here;
 And they that layen at the dore with-oute,
 Ful sykerly they slepten alle y-fere;
 And Pandarus, with a ful sobre chere,
 Goth to the dore anon with-uten lette,
 Ther-as they laye, and softlyt it shette.
 And as he com ayeinward prively,
 His nece awook, and asked 'who goth there?'
 'My dere nece,' quod he, 'it am I;
 Ne wondreth not, ne have of it no fere;'

And ner he com, and seyde hir in hir ere,
'No word, for love of god I yow biseche;
Lat no wight ryse and heren of our speche.'
'What! which wey be ye comen, *benedicite*?'
Quod she, 'and how thus unwist of hem alle?'
'Here at this secre trappe-dore,' quod he.
Quod tho Criseyde, 'lat me som wight calle.'
'Ey! god forbede that it sholde falle,'
Quod Pandarus, 'that ye swich foly wroughte!
They mighte deme thing they never er thoughte!
It is nought good a sleping hound to wake,
Ne yeve a wight a cause to devyne;
Your wommen slepen alle, I under-take,
So that, for hem, the hous men mighte myne;
And slepen wolen til the sonne shyne.
And whan my tale al brought is to an ende,
Unwist, right as I com, so wol I wende.
Now nece myn, ye shul wel understonde,'
Quod he, 'so as ye wommen demen alle,
That for to holde in love a man in honde,
And him hir "leef" and "dere herte" calle,
And maken him an howve above a calle,
I mene, as love an other in this whyle,
She doth hir-self a shame, and him a gyle.
Now wherby that I telle yow al this?
Ye woot your-self, as wel as any wight,
How that your love al fully graunted is
To Troilus, the worthieste knight,
Oon of this world, and ther-to trouthe plyght,
That, but it were on him along, ye nolde
Him never falsen, whyl ye liven sholde.
Now stant it thus, that sith I fro yow wente,
This Troilus, right platly for to seyn,
Is thurgh a goter, by a privè wente,
In-to my chaumbre come in al this reyn,
Unwist of every maner wight, certeyn,
Save of my-self, as wisly have I Ioye,
And by that feith I shal Pryam of Troye!
And he is come in swich payne and distresse
That, but he be al fully wood by this,
He sodeynly mot falle in-to wodnesse,
But-if god helpe; and cause why this is,
He seyth him told is, of a freend of his,
How that ye sholde love oon that hatte Horaste,
For sorwe of which this night shalt been his laste.'
Criseyde, which that al this wonder herde,
Gan sodeynly aboute hir herte colde,
And with a syk she sorwfully answerde,
'Allas! I wende, who-so tales tolde,
My dere herte wolde me not holde
So lightly fals! alas! conceytes wronge,
What harm they doon, for now live I to longe!
Horaste! alas! and falsen Troilus?
I knowe him not, god helpe me so,' quod she;
'Allas! what wikked spirit tolde him thus?

Now certes, eem, to-morwe, and I him see,
 I shal ther-of as ful excusen me
 As ever dide womman, if him lyke';
 And with that word she gan ful sore syke.
 'O god!' quod she, 'so worldly selinesse,
 Which clerkes callen fals felicitee,
 Y-medled is with many a bitterness!
 Ful anguisschous than is, god woot,' quod she,
 'Condicoun of veyn prosperitee;
 For either Ioyes comen nought y-fere,
 Or elles no wight hath hem alwey here.
 O brotel wele of mannes Ioye unstable!
 With what wight so thou be, or how thou pleye,
 Either he woot that thou, Ioye, art muable,
 Or woot it not, it moot ben oon of tweye;
 Now if he woot it not, how may he seye
 That he hath verray Ioye and selinesse,
 That is of ignoraunce ay in derknesse?
 Now if he woot that Ioye is transitorie,
 As every Ioye of worldly thing mot flee,
 Than every tyme he that hath in memorie,
 The drede of lesing maketh him that he
 May in no parfit selinesse be.
 And if to lese his Ioye he set a myte,
 Than semeth it that Ioye is worth ful lyte.
 Wherfore I wol deffyne in this matere,
 That trewely, for ought I can espye,
 Ther is no verray wele in this world here.
 But O, thou wikked serpent Ialousye,
 Thou misbeleved and envious folye,
 Why hastow Troilus me mad untriste,
 That never yet agilde him, that I wiste?'
 Quod Pandarus, 'thus fallen is this cas.'
 'Why, uncle myn,' quod she, 'who tolde him this?
 Why doth my dere herte thus, allas?'
 'Ye woot, ye nece myn,' quod he, 'what is;
 I hope al shal be wel that is amis.
 For ye may quenche al this, if that yow leste,
 And doth right so, for I holde it the beste.'
 'So shal I do to-morwe, y-wis,' quod she,
 'And god to-forn, so that it shal suffyse.'
 'To-morwe? allas, that were a fayr,' quod he,
 'Nay, nay, it may not stonden in this wyse;
 For, nece myn, thus wryten clerkes wyse,
 That peril is with drecching in y-drawe;
 Nay, swich abodes been nought worth an hawe.
 Nece, al thing hath tyme, I dar avowe;
 For whan a chaumber a-fyr is, or an halle,
 Wel more nede is, it sodeynly rescowe
 Than to dispute, and axe amonges alle
 How is this candeale in the straw y-falle?
 A! *benedicite!* for al among that fare
 The harm is doon, and fare-wel feldefare!
 And, nece myn, ne take it not a-greef,
 If that ye suffre him al night in this wo,

God help me so, ye hadde him never leef,
That dar I seyn, now there is but we two;
But wel I woot, that ye wol not do so;
Ye been to wys to do so gret folye,
To putte his lyf al night in Iupartye.
'Hadde I him never leef? By god, I wene
Ye hadde never thing so leef,' quod she.
'Now by my thrift,' quod he, 'that shal be sene;
For, sin ye make this ensample of me,
If I al night wolde him in sorwe see
For al the tresour in the toun of Troye,
I bidde god, I never mote have Ioye!
Now loke thanne, if ye, that been his love,
Shul putte al night his lyf in Iupartye
For thing of nought! Now, by that god above,
Nought only this delay comth of folye,
But of malyce, if that I shal nought lye.
What, platly, and ye suffre him in distresse,
Ye neither bountee doon ne gentillesse!'
Quod tho Criseyde, 'wole ye doon o thing,
And ye therwith shal stinte al his disese;
Have here, and bereth him this blewe ringe,
For ther is no-thing mighte him bettre plesse,
Save I my-self, ne more his herte apese;
And sey my dere herte, that his sorwe
Is causeles, that shal be seen to-morwe.'
'A ring?' quod he, 'ye, hasel-wodes shaken!
Ye, nece myn, that ring moste han a stoon
That mighte dede men alyve maken;
And swich a ring, trowe I that ye have noon.
Discrecioun out of your heed is goon;
That fele I now,' quod he, 'and that is routhe;
O tyme y-lost, wel maystow cursen slouth!
Wot ye not wel that noble and heigh corage
Ne sorweth not, ne stinteth eek for lyte?
But if a fool were in a lalous rage,
I nolde setten at his sorwe a myte,
But feffe him with a fewe wordes whyte
Another day, whan that I mighte him finde:
But this thing stont al in another kinde.
This is so gentil and so tendre of herte,
That with his deeth he wol his sorwes wreke;
For trusteth wel, how sore that him smerte,
He wol to yow no lalouse wordes speke.
And for-thy, nece, er that his herte breke,
So spek your-self to him of this matere;
For with o word ye may his herte stere.
Now have I told what peril he is inne,
And his coming unwist is to every wight;
Ne, pardee, harm may ther be noon ne sinne;
I wol my-self be with yow al this night.
Ye knowe eek how it is your owne knight,
And that, by right, ye moste upon him triste,
And I al prest to fecche him whan yow liste.'
This accident so pitous was to here,

And eek so lyk a sooth, at pryme face,
 And Troilus hir knight to hir so dere,
 His privè coming, and the siker place,
 That, though that she dide him as thanne a grace,
 Considered alle thinges as they stode,
 No wonder is, sin she dide al for gode.
 Cryseyde answerde, 'as wisly god at reste
 My sowle bringe, as me is for him wo!
 And eem, y-wis, fayn wolde I doon the beste,
 If that I hadde grace to do so.
 But whether that ye dwelle or for him go,
 I am, til god me better minde sende,
 At dulcarnon, right at my wittes ende.'
 Quod Pandarus, 'ye, nece, wol ye here?
 Dulcarnon called is "fleminge of wrecches";
 It semeth hard, for wrecches wol not lere
 For verray slouthe or othere wilful tecches;
 This seyde by hem that be not worth two fecches.
 But ye ben wys, and that we han on honde
 Nis neither hard, ne skilful to withstonde.'
 'Thanne, eem,' quod she, 'doth her-of as yow list;
 But er he come I wil up first aryse;
 And, for the love of god, sin al my trist
 Is on yow two, and ye ben bothe wyse,
 So wirceth now in so discreet a wyse,
 That I honour may have, and he plesaunce;
 For I am here al in your governaunce.'
 'That is wel seyde,' quod he, 'my nece dere,
 Ther good thrift on that wyse gentil herte!
 But liggeth stille, and taketh him right here,
 It nedeth not no ferther for him sterte;
 And ech of yow ese otheres sorwes smerte,
 For love of god; and, Venus, I thee herie;
 For sone hope I we shulle ben alle merie.'
 This Troilus ful sone on knees him sette
 Ful sobrelly, right by hir beddes heed,
 And in his beste wyse his lady grette;
 But lord, so she wex sodeynliche reed!
 Ne, though men sholden smyten of hir heed,
 She coude nought a word a-right out-bringe
 So sodeynly, for his sodeyn cominge.
 But Pandarus, that so wel coude fele
 In every thing, to pleye anoon bigan,
 And seyde, 'nece, see how this lord can knele!
 Now, for your trouthe, seeth this gentil man!'
 And with that word he for a quisschen ran,
 And seyde, 'kneleth now, whyl that yow leste,
 Ther god your hertes bringe sone at reste!'
 Can I not seyn, for she bad him not ryse,
 If sorwe it putte out of hir remembraunce,
 Or elles if she toke it in the wyse
 Of duëtee, as for his observaunce;
 But wel finde I she dide him this plesaunce,
 That she him kiste, al-though she syked sore;
 And bad him sitte a-doun with-outen more.

Quod Pandarus, 'now wol ye wel biginne;
Now doth him sitte, gode nece dere,
Upon your beddes syde al there with-inne,
That ech of yow the bet may other here.'
And with that word he drow him to the fere,
And took a light, and fond his contenance
As for to loke up-on an old romaunce.
Criseyde, that was Troilus lady right,
And cleer stood on a ground of sikernesse,
Al thoughte she, hir servaunt and hir knight
Ne sholde of right non untrouthe in hir gesse,
Yet nathelees, considered his distresse,
And that love is in cause of swich folye,
Thus to him spak she of his Ielousye:
'Lo, herte myn, as wolde the excellence
Of love, ayeins the which that no man may,
Ne oughte eek goodly maken resistance
And eek bycause I felte wel and say
Your grete trouthe, and servyse every day;
And that your herte al myn was, sooth to seyne,
This droof me for to rewe up-on your peyne.
And your goodnesse have I founde alwey yit,
Of whiche, my dere herte and al my knight,
I thonke it yow, as fer as I have wit,
Al can I nought as mucche as it were right;
And I, emforth my conninge and my might,
Have and ay shal, how sore that me smerte,
Ben to yow trewe and hool, with al myn herte;
And dredelees, that shal be founde at preve.—
But, herte myn, what al this is to seyne
Shal wel be told, so that ye noght yow greve,
Though I to yow right on your-self compleyne.
For ther-with mene I fynally the peyne,
That halt your herte and myn in hevinesse,
Fully to sleen, and every wrong redresse.
My goode, myn, not I for-why ne how
That Ialousye, allas! that wikked wivere,
Thus causelees is copen in-to yow;
The harm of which I wolde fayn deliver!
Allas! that he, al hool, or of him slivere,
Shuld have his refut in so digne a place,
Ther Iove him sone out of your herte arace!
But O, thou Iove, O auctor of nature,
Is this an honour to thy deitee,
That folk ungiltif suffren here iniure,
And who that giltif is, al quit goth he?
O were it leful for to pleyne on thee,
That undeserved suffrest Ialousye,
And that I wolde up-on thee pleyne and crye!
Eek al my wo is this, that folk now usen
To seyn right thus, "ye, Ialousye is love!"
And wolde a busshel venim al excusen,
For that o greyn of love is on it shove!
But that wot heighe god that sit above,
If it be lyker love, or hate, or grame;

And after that, it oughte bere his name.
 But certeyn is, som maner Ialousye
 Is excusable more than som, y-wis.
 As whan cause is, and som swich fantasye
 With pietee so wel repressed is,
 That it unnethe dooth or seyth amis,
 But goodly drinketh up al his distresse;
 And that excuse I, for the gentillesse.
 And som so ful of furie is and despyt,
 That it sourmounteth his repressioun;
 But herte myn, ye be not in that plyt,
 That thanke I god, for whiche your passioun
 I wol not calle it but illusioun,
 Of habundaunce of love and bisy cure,
 That dooth your herte this disese endure.
 Of which I am right sory, but not wrooth;
 But, for my devoir and your hertes reste,
 Wher-so yow list, by ordal or by ooth,
 By sort, or in what wyse so yow leste,
 For love of god, lat preve it for the beste!
 And if that I be giltif, do me deye,
 Allas! what mighte I more doon or seye?’
 With that a fewe brighte teres newe
 Out of hir eyen fille, and thus she seyde,
 ‘Now god, thou wost, in thought ne dede untrewed
 To Troilus was never yet Criseyde.’
 With that hir heed down in the bed she leyde,
 And with the shete it wreigh, and syghed sore,
 And held hir pees; not o word spak she more.
 But now help god to quenchen al this sorwe,
 So hope I that he shal, for he best may;
 For I have seyn, of a ful misty morwe
 Folwen ful ofte a mery someres day;
 And after winter folweth grene May.
 Men seen alday, and reden eek in stories,
 That after sharpe shoures been victories.
 This Troilus, whan he hir wordes herde,
 Have ye no care, him liste not to slepe;
 For it thoughte him no strokes of a yerde
 To here or seen Criseyde his lady wepe;
 But wel he felte aboute his herte crepe,
 For every teer which that Criseyde avertere,
 The crampe of deeth, to streyne him by the herte.
 And in his minde he gan the tyme acurse
 That he cam therë, and that he was born;
 For now is wikke y-turned in-to worse,
 And al that labour he hath doon biforn,
 He wende it lost, he thoughte he nas but lorn.
 ‘O Pandarus,’ thoughte he, ‘allas! thy wyle
 Serveth of nought, so weylawey the whye!’
 And therewithal he heng a-doun the heed,
 And fil on knees, and sorwfully he sighte;
 What mighte he seyn? he felte he nas but deed,
 For wrooth was she that shulde his sorwes lighte.
 But nathelees, whan that he spoken mighte,

Than seyde he thus, 'god woot, that of this game,
Whan al is wist, than am I not to blame!'
Ther-with the sorwe so his herte shette,
That from his eyen fil ther not a tere,
And every spirit his vigour in-knette,
So they astoned and oppressed were.
The feling of his sorwe, or of his fere,
Or of ought elles, fled was out of towne;
And doun he fel al sodeynly a-swowne.
This was no litel sorwe for to see;
But al was hust, and Pandare up as faste,
'O nece, pees, or we be lost,' quod he,
Beth nought agast; but certeyn, at the laste,
For this or that, he in-to bedde him caste,
And seyde, 'O thief, is this a mannes herte?'
And of he rente al to his bare sherte;
And seyde, 'nece, but ye helpe us now,
Allas, your owne Troilus is lorn!'
'Y-wis, so wolde I, and I wiste how,
Ful fayn,' quod she; 'allas! that I was born!'
'Ye, nece, wol ye pullen out the thorn
That stiketh in his herte?' quod Pandare;
'Sey "al foryeve," and stint is al this fare!'
'Ye, that to me,' quod she, 'ful lever were
Than al the good the sonne aboute gooth';
And therwith-al she swoor him in his ere,
'Y-wis, my dere herte, I am nought wrooth,
Have here my trouthe and many another ooth;
Now speek to me, for it am I, Cryseyde!'
But al for nought; yet mighte he not a-breyde.
Therwith his pous and pawmes of his hondes
They gan to frote, and wethe his temples tweyne,
And, to deliveren him from bittre bondes,
She ofte him kiste; and, shortly for to seyne,
Him to revoken she dide al hir peyne.
And at the laste, he gan his breeth to drawe,
And of his swough sone after that adawe,
And gan bet minde and reson to him take,
But wonder sore he was abayst, y-wis.
And with a syk, whan he gan bet a-wake,
He seyde, 'O mercy, god, what thing is this?'
'Why do ye with your-selven thus amis?'
Quod tho Criseyde, 'is this a mannes game?
What, Troilus! wol ye do thus, for shame?'
And therwith-al hir arm over him she leyde,
And al foryaf, and ofte tyme him keste.
He thonked hir, and to hir spak, and seyde
As fil to purpos for his herte reste.
And she to that answerde him as hir leste;
And with hir goodly wordes him disporte
She gan, and ofte his sorwes to comforte.
Quod Pandarus, 'for ought I can espyen,
This light nor I ne serven here of nought;
Light is not good for syke folkes yën.
But for the love of god, sin ye be brought

In thus good plyt, lat now non hevvy thought
 Ben hanginge in the hertes of yow tweye:
 And bar the candele to the chimeneye.
 Sone after this, though it no nede were,
 Whan she swich othes as hir list devyse
 Hadde of him take, hir thoughte tho no fere,
 Ne cause eek non, to bidde him thennes ryse.
 Yet lesse thing than othes may suffyse
 In many a cas; for every wight, I gesse,
 That loveth wel meneth but gentillesse.
 But in effect she wolde wite anoon
 Of what man, and eek where, and also why
 He Ielous was, sin ther was cause noon;
 And eek the signe, that he took it by,
 She bad him that to telle hir bisily,
 Or elles, certeyn, she bar him on honde,
 That this was doon of malis, hir to fonde.
 With-uten more, shortly for to seyne,
 He moste obeye un-to his lady heste;
 And for the lasse harm, he moste feyne.
 He seyde hir, whan she was at swiche a feste
 She mighte on him han loked at the leste;
 Not I not what, al dere y-nough a risshe,
 As he that nedes moste a cause fissue.
 And she answerde, 'swete, al were it so,
 What harm was that, sin I non yvel mene?
 For, by that god that boughte us bothe two,
 In alle thinge is myn entente clene.
 Swich arguments ne been not worth a bene;
 Wol ye the childish Ialous contrefete?
 Now were it worthy that ye were y-bete.'
 Tho Troilus gan sorwfully to syke,
 Lest she be wrooth, him thoughte his herte deyde;
 And seyde, 'allas! upon my sorwes syke
 Have mercy, swete herte myn, Cryseyde!
 And if that, in tho wordes that I seyde,
 Be any wrong, I wol no more trespase;
 Do what yow list, I am al in your grace.'
 And she answerde, 'of gilt misericorde!
 That is to seyn, that I foryeve al this;
 And ever-more on this night yow recorde,
 And beth wel war ye do no more amis.'
 'Nay, dere herte myn,' quod he, 'y-wis.'
 'And now,' quod she, 'that I have do yow smerte,
 Foryeve it me, myn owene swete herte.'
 This Troilus, with blisse of that supprysed,
 Put al in goddes hond, as he that mente
 No-thing but wel; and, sodeynly avysed,
 He hir in armes faste to him hente.
 And Pandarus, with a ful good entente,
 Leyde him to slepe, and seyde, 'if ye ben wyse,
 Swowneth not now, lest more folk aryse.'
 What mighte or may the sely larke seye,
 Whan that the sparhawk hath it in his foot?
 I can no more, but of thise ilke tweye,

To whom this tale suere be or soot,
Though that I tarie a yeer, som-tyme I moot,
After myn auctor, tellen hir gladnesse,
As wel as I have told hir hevynesse.
Criseyde, which that felte hir thus y-take,
As writen clerkes in hir bokes olde,
Right as an aspes leef she gan to quake,
Whan she him felte hir in his armes folde.
But Troilus, al hool of cares colde,
Gan thanken tho the blisful goddes seven;
Thus sondry peynes bringen folk to hevene.
This Troilus in armes gan hir streyne,
And seyde, 'O swete, as ever mote I goon,
Now be ye caught, now is ther but we tweyne;
Now yeldeth yow, for other boot is noon.'
To that Criseyde answerde thus anon,
'Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte dere,
Ben yolde, y-wis, I were now not here!'
O! sooth is seyde, that heled for to be
As of a fevre or othere greet syknesse,
Men moste drinke, as men may often see,
Ful bittre drink; and for to han gladnesse,
Men drinken often peyne and greet distresse;
I mene it here, as for this aventure,
That thourgh a peyne hath founden al his cure.
And now swetnesse semeth more sweet,
That bitternesse assayed was biforn;
For out of wo in blisse now they flete.
Non swich they felten, sith they were born;
Now is this bet, than bothe two be lorn!
For love of god, take every womman hede
To werken thus, if it comth to the nede.
Criseyde, al quit from every drede and tene,
As she that iuste cause hadde him to triste,
Made him swich feste, it loye was to sene,
Whan she his trouthe and clene entente wiste.
And as aboute a tree, with many a twiste,
Bitrent and wryth the sote wode-binde,
Gan eche of hem in armes other winde.
And as the newe abaysshed nightingale,
That stinteth first whan she biginneth singe,
Whan that she hereth any herde tale,
Or in the hegges any wight steringe,
And after siker dooth hir voys out-ringe;
Right so Criseyde, whan hir drede stente,
Opned hir herte, and tolde him hir entente.
And right as he that seeth his deeth y-shapen,
And deye moot, in ought that he may gesse,
And sodeynly rescous doth him escapen,
And from his deeth is brought in sikernesse,
For al this world, in swich present gladnesse
Was Troilus, and hath his lady swete;
With worse hap god lat us never mete!
Hir armes smale, hir streyghte bak and softe,
Hir sydes longe, fleshly, smothe, and whyte

He gan to stroke, and good thrift bad ful ofte
 Hir snowish throte, hir brestes rounde and lyte;
 Thus in this hevene he gan him to delyte,
 And ther-with-al a thousand tyme hir kiste;
 That, what to done, for Ioye unnethe he wiste.
 Than seyde he thus, 'O, Love, O, Charitee,
 Thy moder eek, Citherea the swete,
 After thy-self next heried be she,
 Venus mene I, the wel-willy planete;
 And next that, Imenëus, I thee grete;
 For never man was to yow goddes holde
 As I, which ye han brought fro cares colde.
 Benigne Love, thou holy bond of thinges,
 Who-so wol grace, and list thee nought honouren,
 Lo, his desyr wol flee with-oute wings.
 For, noldestow of bountee hem socouren
 That serven best and most alwey labouren,
 Yet were al lost, that dar I wel seyn, certes,
 But-if thy grace passed our desertes.
 And for thou me, that coude leest deserve
 Of hem that nombred been un-to thy grace,
 Hast holpen, ther I lykly was to sterve,
 And me bistowed in so heygh a place
 That thilke boundes may no blisse pace,
 I can no more, but laude and reverence
 Be to thy bounte and thyn excellence!'

And therwith-al Criseyde anon he kiste,
 Of which, certeyn, she felte no disese.
 And thus seyde he, 'now wolde god I wiste,
 Myn herte swete, how I yow mighte plese!
 What man,' quod he, 'was ever thus at ese
 As I, on whiche the faireste and the beste
 That ever I say, deyneth hir herte reste.
 Here may men seen that mercy passeth right;
 The experience of that is felt in me,
 That am unworthy to so swete a wight.
 But herte myn, of your benignitee,
 So thenketh, though that I unworthy be,
 Yet mot I nede amenden in som wyse,
 Right thourgh the vertu of your heyghe servyse.
 And for the love of god, my lady dere,
 Sin god hath wrought me for I shal yow serve,
 As thus I mene, that ye wol be my sterve,
 To do me live, if that yow liste, or sterve,
 So techeth me how that I may deserve
 Your thank, so that I, thurgh myn ignoraunce,
 Ne do no-thing that yow be displeaunce.
 For certes, fresshe wommanliche wyf,
 This dar I seye, that trouthe and diligence,
 That shal ye finden in me al my lyf,
 Ne I wol not, certeyn, breken your defence;
 And if I do, present or in absence,
 For love of god, lat slee me with the dede,
 If that it lyke un-to your womanhede.'
 'Y-wis,' quod she, 'myn owne hertes list,

My ground of ese, and al myn herte dere,
Graunt mercy, for on that is al my trist;
But late us falle away fro this matere;
For it suffyseth, this that seyde is here.
And at o word, with-oute repentaunce,
Wel-come, my knight, my pees, my suffisaunce!’
Of hir delyt, or loyes oon the leste
Were impossible to my wit to seye;
But iuggeth, ye that han ben at the feste,
Of swich gladnesse, if that hem liste pleye!
I can no more, but thus thise ilke tweye
That night, be-twixen drede and sikernesse,
Felten in love the grete worthinesse.
O blisful night, of hem so longe y-sought,
How blithe un-to hem bothe two thou were!
Why ne hadde I swich on with my soule y-bought,
Ye, or the leeste loye that was there?
A-wey, thou foule daunger and thou fere,
And lat hem in this hevene blisse dwelle,
That is so heygh, that al ne can I telle!
But sooth is, though I can not tellen al,
As can myn auctor, of his excellence,
Yet have I seyde, and, god to-forn, I shal
In every thing al hoolly his sentence.
And if that I, at loves reverence,
Have any word in echid for the beste,
Doth therwith-al right as your-selven leste.
For myne wordes, here and every part,
I speke hem alle under correccioun
Of yow, that feling han in loves art,
And putte it al in your discrecioun
To encrese or maken diminucioun
Of my langage, and that I yow bi-seche;
But now to purpos of my rather speche.
Thise ilke two, that ben in armes laft,
So looth to hem a-sonder goon it were,
That ech from other wende been biraft,
Or elles, lo, this was hir moste fere,
That al this thing but nyce dremes were;
For which ful ofte ech of hem seyde, ‘O swete,
Clippe ich yow thus, or elles I it mete?’
And, lord! so he gan goodly on hir see,
That never his look ne bleynte from hir face,
And seyde, ‘O dere herte, may it be
That it be sooth, that ye ben in this place?’
‘Ye, herte myn, god thank I of his grace!’
Quod tho Criseyde, and therwith-al him kiste,
That where his spirit was, for loye he niste.
This Troilus ful ofte hir eyen two
Gan for to kisse, and seyde, ‘O eyen clere,
It were ye that wroughte me swich wo,
Ye humble nettes of my lady dere!
Though ther be mercy writen in your chere,
God wot, the text ful hard is, sooth, to finde,
How coude ye with-oute bond me binde?’

Therwith he gan hir faste in armes take,
 And wel an hundred tymes gan he syke,
 Nought swiche sorwful sykes as men make
 For wo, or elles whan that folk ben syke,
 But esy sykes, swiche as been to lyke,
 That shewed his affeccoun with-inne;
 Of swiche sykes coude he nought bilinne.
 Sone after this they speke of sondry thinges,
 As fil to purpos of this aventure,
 And pleyinge entrechaungeden hir rings,
 Of which I can nought tellen no scripture;
 But wel I woot a broche, gold and asure,
 In whiche a ruby set was lyk an herte,
 Criseyde him yaf, and stak it on his sherte.
 Lord! trowe ye, a coveitous, a wrecche,
 That blameth love and holt of it despyt,
 That, of tho pens that he can mokre and kecche,
 Was ever yet y-yeve him swich delyt,
 As is in love, in oo poynt, in som plyt?
 Nay, doutelees, for also god me save,
 So parfit loye may no nigard have!
 They wol sey 'yis,' but lord! so that they lye,
 Tho bisy wrecches, ful of wo and drede!
 They callen love a woodnesse or folye,
 But it shal falle hem as I shal yow rede;
 They shul forgo the whyte and eke the rede,
 And live in wo, ther god yeve hem mischaunce,
 And every lover in his trouthe avaunce!
 As wolde god, tho wrecches, that dispysse
 Servyse of love, hadde eres al-so longe
 As hadde Myda, ful of coveityse;
 And ther-to dronken hadde as hoot and stronge
 As Crassus dide for his affectis wronge,
 To techen hem that they ben in the vyce,
 And lovers nought, al-though they holde hem nyce!
 Thise ilke two, of whom that I yow seye,
 Whan that hir hertes wel assured were,
 Tho gonne they to speken and to pleye,
 And eek rehercen how, and whanne, and where,
 They knewe hem first, and every wo and fere
 That passed was; but al swich hevynesse,
 I thanke it god, was tourned to gladnesse.
 And ever-mo, whan that hem fel to speke
 Of any thing of swich a tyme agoon,
 With kissing al that tale sholde breke,
 And fallen in a newe loye anon,
 And diden al hir might, sin they were oon,
 For to recoveren blisse and been at ese,
 And passed wo with loye countrepeyse.
 Reson wil not that I speke of sleep,
 For it accordeth nought to my matere;
 God woot, they toke of that ful litel keep,
 But lest this night, that was to hem so dere,
 Ne sholde in veyn escape in no manere,
 It was biset in loye and businesse

Of al that souneth in-to gentilnesse.
But whan the cok, comune astrologer,
Gan on his brest to bete, and after crowe,
And Lucifer, the dayes messenger,
Gan for to ryse, and out hir bemes throwe;
And estward roos, to him that coude it knowe,
Fortuna maior, [than] anon Criseyde,
With herte sore, to Troilus thus seyde:—
'Myn hertes lyf, my trist and my plesaunce,
That I was born, allas! what me is wo,
That day of us mot make desseveraunce!
For tyme it is to ryse, and hennes go,
Or elles I am lost for evermo!
O night, allas! why niltow over us hove,
As longe as whanne Almena lay by love?
O blake night, as folk in bokes rede,
That shapen art by god this world to hyde
At certeyn tymes with thy derke wede,
That under that men mighte in reste abyde,
Wel oughte bestes pleyne, and folk thee chyde,
That there-as day with labour wolde us breste,
That thou thus fleest, and deynest us nought reste!
Thou dost, allas! to shortly thyn offyce,
Thou rakel night, ther god, makere of kinde,
Thee, for thyn hast and thyn unkinde vyce,
So faste ay to our hemi-spere binde,
That never-more under the ground thou winde!
For now, for thou so hyst out of Troye,
Have I forgon thus hastily my loye!
This Troilus, that with tho wordes felte,
As thoughte him tho, for pietous distresse,
The bloody teres from his herte melte,
As he that never yet swich hevynesse
Assayed hadde, out of so greet gladnesse,
Gan therwith-al Criseyde his lady dere
In armes streyne, and seyde in this manere:—
'O cruel day, accusour of the loye
That night and love han stole and faste y-wryen,
A-cursed be thy coming in-to Troye,
For every bore hath oon of thy bright yē!
Envyous day, what list thee so to spyen?
What hastow lost, why sekestow this place,
Ther god thy lyght so quenche, for his grace?
Allas! what han thise loveres thee agilt,
Dispitous day? thyn be the pyne of helle!
For many a love-re hastow shent, and wilt;
Thy pouring in wol no-where lete hem dwelle.
What proferestow thy light here for to selle?
Go selle it hem that smale seles graven,
We wol thee nought, us nedeth no day haven.'
And eek the sonne Tytan gan he chyde,
And seyde, 'O fool, wel may men thee dispyse,
That hast the Dawing al night by thy syde,
And suffrest hir so sone up fro thee ryse,
For to disesen loveres in this wyse.

What! hold your bed ther, thou, and eek thy Morwe!
 I bidde god, so yeve yow bothe sorwe!
 Therwith ful sore he sighte, and thus he seyde,
 'My lady right, and of my wele or wo
 The welle and rote, O goodly myn, Criseyde,
 And shal I ryse, allas! and shal I go?
 Now fele I that myn herte moot a-two!
 For how sholde I my lyf an houre save,
 Sin that with yow is al the lyf I have?
 What shal I doon, for certes, I not how,
 Ne whanne, allas! I shal the tyme see,
 That in this plyt I may be eft with yow;
 And of my lyf, god woot, how that shal be,
 Sin that desyr right now so byteth me,
 That I am deed anoon, but I retourne.
 How sholde I longe, allas! fro yow soiourne?
 But nathelees, myn owene lady bright,
 Yit were it so that I wiste outrely,
 That I, your humble servaunt and your knight,
 Were in your herte set so fermely
 As ye in myn, the which thing, trewely,
 Me lever were than thise worldes tweyne,
 Yet sholde I bet enduren al my peyne.'
 To that Cryseyde answerde right anoon,
 And with a syk she seyde, 'O herte dere,
 The game, y-wis, so ferforth now is goon,
 That first shal Phebus falle fro his spere,
 And every egle been the dowves fere,
 And every roche out of his place sterte,
 Er Troilus out of Criseydes herte!
 Ye be so depe in-with myn herte grave,
 That, though I wolde it turne out of my thought,
 As wisly verray god my soule save,
 To dyen in the peyne, I coude nought!
 And, for the love of god that us hath wrought,
 Lat in your brayn non other fantasye
 So crepe, that it cause me to dye!
 And that ye me wolde han as faste in minde
 As I have yow, that wolde I yow bi-seche;
 And, if I wiste soothly that to finde,
 God mighte not a poynt my loyes eche!
 But, herte myn, with-oute more speche,
 Beth to me trewe, or elles were it routhe;
 For I am thyn, by god and by my trouthe!
 Beth glad for-thy, and live in sikernesse;
 Thus seyde I never er this, ne shal to mo;
 And if to yow it were a gret gladnesse
 To turne ayein, soone after that ye go,
 As fayn wolde I as ye, it were so,
 As wisly god myn herte bringe at reste!
 And him in armes took, and ofte keste.
 Agayns his wil, sin it mot nedes be,
 This Troilus up roos, and faste him cledde,
 And in his armes took his lady free
 An hundred tyme, and on his wey him spedde,

And with swich wordes as his herte bledde,
He seyde, 'farewel, my dere herte swete,
Ther god us graunte sounde and sone to mete!'
To which no word for sorwe she answerde,
So sore gan his parting hir destreyne;
And Troilus un-to his palays ferde,
As woo bigon as she was, sooth to seyne;
So hard him wrong of sharp desyr the peyne
For to ben eft there he was in plesaunce,
That it may never out of his remembraunce.
Retorned to his real palais, sone
He softe in-to his bed gan for to slinke,
To slepe longe, as he was wont to done,
But al for nought; he may wel ligge and winke,
But sleep ne may ther in his herte sinke;
Thenkinge how she, for whom desyr him brende,
A thousand-fold was worth more than he wende.
And in his thought gan up and doun to winde
Hir wordes alle, and every contenaunce,
And fermely impressen in his minde
The leste poynt that to him was plesaunce;
And verrayliche, of thilke remembraunce,
Desyr al newe him brende, and lust to brede
Gan more than erst, and yet took he non hede.
Criseyde also, right in the same wyse,
Of Troilus gan in hir herte shette
His worthinesse, his lust, his dedes wyse,
His gentilesse, and how she with him mette,
Thonkinge love he so wel hir bisette;
Desyring eft to have hir herte dere
In swich a plyt, she dorste make him chere.
Pandare, a-morwe which that comen was
Un-to his nece, and gan hir fayre grete,
Seyde, 'al this night so reyned it, allas!
That al my drede is that ye, nece swete,
Han litel layser had to slepe and mete;
Al night,' quod he, 'hath reyn so do me wake,
That som of us, I trowe, hir hedes ake.'
And ner he com, and seyde, 'how stont it now
This mery morwe, nece, how can ye fare?'
Criseyde answerde, 'never the bet for yow,
Fox that ye been, god yeve your herte care!
God helpe me so, ye caused al this fare,
Trow I,' quod she, 'for alle your wordes whyte;
O! who-so seeth yow knoweth yow ful lyte!'
With that she gan hir face for to wrye
With the shete, and wex for shame al reed;
And Pandarus gan under for to pryde,
And seyde, 'nece, if that I shal ben deed,
Have here a swerd, and smyteth of myn heed.'
With that his arm al sodeynly he thriste
Under hir nekke, and at the laste hir kiste.
I passe al that which chargeth nought to seye,
What! God foryaf his deeth, and she al-so
Foryaf, and with hir uncle gan to pleye,

For other cause was ther noon than so.
 But of this thing right to the effect to go,
 Whan tyme was, hom til hir hous she wente,
 And Pandarus hath fully his entente.
 Now torne we ayein to Troilus,
 That resteles ful longe a-bedde lay,
 And prevely sente after Pandarus,
 To him to come in al the haste he may.
 He com anoon, nought ones seyde he 'nay,'
 And Troilus ful sobrelly he grette,
 And doun upon his beddes syde him sette.
 This Troilus, with al the affeccoun
 Of frendes love that herte may devyse,
 To Pandarus on kneës fil adoun,
 And er that he wolde of the place aryse,
 He gan him thonken in his beste wyse;
 A hondred sythe he gan the tyme blesse,
 That he was born to bringe him fro distresse.
 He seyde, 'O frend, of frendes the alderbeste
 That ever was, the sothe for to telle,
 Thou hast in hevene y-brought my soule at reste
 Fro Flegiton, the fery flood of helle;
 That, though I mighte a thousand tymes selle,
 Upon a day, my lyf in thy servyse,
 It mighte nought a mote in that suffyse.
 The sonne, which that al the world may see,
 Saw never yet, my lyf, that dar I leye,
 So inly fair and goodly as is she,
 Whos I am al, and shal, til that I deye;
 And, that I thus am hires, dar I seye,
 That thanked be the heighe worthinesse
 Of love, and eek thy kinde bisinesse.
 Thus hastow me no litel thing y-yive,
 Fo which to thee obliged be for ay
 My lyf, and why? for thorough thyn help I live;
 For elles deed hadde I be many a day.'
 And with that word doun in his bed he lay,
 And Pandarus ful sobrelly him herde
 Til al was seyd, and thanne he him answerde:
 'My dere frend, if I have doon for thee
 In any cas, god wot, it is me leef;
 And am as glad as man may of it be,
 God help me so; but tak now not a-greef
 That I shal seyn, be war of this myscheef,
 That, there-as thou now brought art in-to blisse,
 That thou thy-self ne cause it nought to misse.
 For of fortunes sharp adversitee
 The worst kinde of infortune is this,
 A man to have ben in prosperitee,
 And it remembren, whan it passed is.
 Thou art wys y-nough, for-thy do nought amis;
 Be not to rakel, though thou sitte warme,
 For if thou be, certeyn, it wol thee harme.
 Thou art at ese, and holde thee wel ther-inne.
 For also seur as reed is every fyr,

As greet a craft is kepe wel as winne;
Brydle alwey wel thy speche and thy desyr.
For worldly loye halt not but by a wyr;
That preveth wel, it brest alday so ofte;
For-thy nede is to werke with it softe.
Quod Troilus, 'I hope, and god to-forn,
My dere frend, that I shal so me bere,
That in my gilt ther shal no thing be lorn,
Ne I nil not rakle as for to greven here;
It nedeth not this matere ofte tere;
For wistestow myn herte wel, Pandare,
God woot, of this thou woldest litel care.'
Tho gan he telle him of his glade night.
And wher-of first his herte dredde, and how,
And seyde, 'freend, as I am trewe knight,
And by that feyth I shal to god and yow,
I hadde it never half so hote as now;
And ay the more that desyr me byteth
To love hir best, the more it me delyteth.
I noot my-self not wisly what it is;
But now I fele a newe qualitee,
Ye, al another than I dide er this.'
Pandare answerde, and seyde thus, that he
That ones may in hevene blisse be,
He feleth other weyes, dar I leye,
Than thilke tyme he first herde of it seye.
This is o word for al; this Troilus
Was never ful, to speke of this matere,
And for to preysen un-to Pandarus
The bountee of his righte lady dere,
And Pandarus to thanke and maken chere.
This tale ay was span-newe to biginne
Til that the night departed hem a-twinne.
Sone after this, for that fortune it wolde,
I-comen was the blisful tyme swete,
That Troilus was warned that he sholde,
Ther he was erst, Criseyde his lady mete;
For which he felte his herte in loye flete;
And feythfully gan alle the goddes herie;
And lat see now if that he can be merie.
And holden was the forme and al the wyse,
Of hir cominge, and eek of his also,
As it was erst, which nedeth nought devyse.
But playnly to the effect right for to go,
In loye and seurte Pandarus hem two
A-bedde broughte, whan hem bothe leste,
And thus they ben in quite and in reste.
Nought nedeth it to yow, sin they ben met,
To aske at me if that they blythe were;
For if it erst was wel, tho was it bet
A thousand-fold, this nedeth not enquire.
A-gon was every sorwe and every fere;
And bothe, y-wis, they hadde, and so they wende,
As muche loye as herte may comprende.
This is no litel thing of for to seye,

This passeth every wit for to devyse;
 For eche of hem gan otheres lust obeye;
 Felicitee, which that thise clerkes wyse
 Commenden so, ne may not here suffyse.
 This Ioye may not writen been with inke,
 This passeth al that herte may bithinke.
 But cruel day, so wel-away the stounde!
 Gan for to aproche, as they by signes knewe,
 For whiche hem thoughte felen dethes wounde;
 So wo was hem, that changen gan hir hewe,
 And day they gonnen to dispysse al newe,
 Calling it traytour, envyous, and worse,
 And bitterly the dayes light they curse.
 Quod Troilus, 'allas! now am I war
 That Pirous and tho swifte stedes three,
 Whiche that drawen forth the sonnes char,
 Han goon som by-path in despyt of me;
 That maketh it so sone day to be;
 And, for the sonne him hasteth thus to ryse,
 Ne shal I never doon him sacrifysse!'

But nedes day departe moste hem sone,
 And whanne hir speche doon was and hir chere,
 They twinne anon as they were wont to done,
 And setten tyme of meting eft y-fere;
 And many a night they wroughte in this manere.
 And thus Fortune a tyme ladde in Ioye
 Criseyde, and eek this kinges sone of Troye.
 In suffisaunce, in blisse, and in singinges,
 This Troilus gan al his lyf to lede;
 He spendeth, Iusteth, maketh festeyinges;
 He yeveth frely ofte, and chaungeth wede,
 And held aboute him alwey, out of drede,
 A world of folk, as cam him wel of kinde,
 The fressheste and the beste he coude fynde;
 That swich a voys was of hym and a stevene
 Thorough-out the world, of honour and largesse,
 That it up rong un-to the yate of hevene.
 And, as in love, he was in swich gladnesse,
 That in his herte he demede, as I gesse,
 That there nis love in this world at ese
 So wel as he, and thus gan love him plese.
 The godlihede or beautee which that kinde
 In any other lady hadde y-set
 Can not the mountaunce of a knot unbinde,
 A-boute his herte, of al Criseydes net.
 He was so narwe y-masked and y-knet,
 That it undon on any manere syde,
 That nil not been, for ought that may betyde.
 And by the hond ful ofte he wolde take
 This Pandarus, and in-to gardin lede,
 And swich a feste and swich a proces make
 Him of Criseyde, and of hir womanhede,
 And of hir beautee, that, with-outen drede,
 It was an hevene his wordes for to here;
 And thanne he wolde singe in this manere.

'Love, that of erthe and see hath governaunce,
Love, that his hestes hath in hevene hye,
Love, that with an holsom alliaunce
Halt peples ioyned, as him list hem gye,
Love, that knetteth lawe of companye,
And couples doth in vertu for to dwelle,
Bind this acord, that I have told and telle;
That that the world with feyth, which that is stable,
Dyverseth so his stoundes concordinge,
That elements that been so discordable
Holden a bond perpetuely duringe,
That Phebus mote his rosy day forth bringe,
And that the mone hath lordship over the nightes,
Al this doth Love; ay heried be his mightes!
That that the see, that gredy is to flowen,
Constreyneth to a certeyn ende so
His flodes, that so fersly they ne growen
To drenchen erthe and al for ever-mo;
And if that Love ought lete his brydel go,
Al that now loveth a-sonder sholde lepe,
And lost were al, that Love halt now to-hepe.
So wolde god, that auctor is of kinde,
That, with his bond, Love of his vertu liste
To cerclen hertes alle, and faste binde,
That from his bond no wight the wey out wiste.
And hertes colde, hem wolde I that he twiste
To make hem love, and that hem leste ay rewe
On hertes sore, and kepe hem that ben trewe.'
In alle nedes, for the tounes werre,
He was, and ay the firste in armes dight;
And certeynly, but-if that bokes erre,
Save Ector, most y-drad of any wight;
And this encrees of hardinesse and might
Cam him of love, his ladies thank to winne,
That altered his spirit so with-inne.
In tyme of trewe, on haukinge wolde he ryde,
Or elles hunten boor, bere, or lyoun;
The smale bestes leet he gon bi-syde.
And whan that he com rydinge in-to toun,
Ful ofte his lady, from hir window doun,
As fresh as faucon comen out of muwe,
Ful redy was, him goodly to saluwe.
And most of love and vertu was his speche,
And in despyt hadde alle wrecchednesse;
And doutelees, no nede was him biseche
To honouren hem that hadde worthinesse,
And esen hem that weren in distresse.
And glad was he if any wight wel ferde,
That lover was, whan he it wiste or herde.
For sooth to seyn, he lost held every wight
But-if he were in loves heigh servyse,
I mene folk that oughte it been of right.
And over al this, so wel coude he devyse
Of sentement, and in so unkouth wyse
Al his array, that every lover thoughte,

That al was wel, what-so he seyde or wroughte.
 And though that he be come of blood royal,
 Him liste of pryde at no wight for to chase;
 Benigne he was to ech in general,
 For which he gat him thank in every place.
 Thus wolde Love, y-heried be his grace,
 That Pryde, Envy, Ire, and Avaryce
 He gan to flee, and every other vyce.
 Thou lady bright, the doughter to Dione,
 Thy blinde and winged sone eek, daun Cupyde;
 Ye sustren nyne eek, that by Elicone
 In hil Parnaso listen for to abyde,
 That ye thus fer han deyned me to gyde,
 I can no more, but sin that ye wol wende,
 Ye heried been for ay, with-outen ende!
 Thourgh yow have I seyde fully in my song
 Theffect and Ioye of Troilus servyse,
 Al be that ther was som disese among,
 As to myn auctor listeth to devyse.
 My thridde book now ende ich in this wyse;
 And Troilus in luste and in quite
 Is with Criseyde, his owne herte swete.

Explicit Liber Tercius.

BOOK IV.

[**Prohemium.**]

But al to litel, weylawey the whyle,
 Lasteth swich Ioye, y-thonked be Fortune!
 That semeth trewest, whan she wol bygyle,
 And can to foles so hir song entune,
 That she hem hent and blent, traytour comune;
 And whan a wight is from hir wheel y-throwe,
 Than laugheth she, and maketh him the mowe.
 From Troilus she gan hir brighte face
 Away to wrythe, and took of him non hede,
 But caste him clene oute of his lady grace,
 And on hir wheel she sette up Diomed;e;
 For which right now myn herte ginneth blede,
 And now my penne, allas! with which I wryte,
 Quaketh for drede of that I moot endyte.
 For how Criseyde Troilus forsook,
 Or at the leste, how that she was unkinde,
 Mot hennes-forth ben matere of my book,
 As wryten folk thorough which it is in minde.
 Allas! that they shulde ever cause finde
 To speke hir harm; and if they on hir lye,
 Y-wis, hem-self sholde han the vilanye.
 O ye Herines, Nightes doughtren three,
 That endelees compleynen ever in pyne,
 Megera, Alete, and eek Thesiphone;
 Thou cruel Mars eek, fader to Quiryne,
 This ilke ferthe book me helpeth fyne,
 So that the los of lyf and love y-fere
 Of Troilus be fully shewed here.

Explicit [prohemium]. Incipit Quartus Liber.

Ligginge in ost, as I have seyde er this,
The Grekes stronge, aboute Troye toun,
Bifel that, whan that Phebus shyning is
Up-on the brest of Hercules Lyoun,
That Ector, with ful many a bold baroun,
Caste on a day with Grekes for to fighte,
As he was wont to greve hem what he mighte.
Not I how longe or short it was bitwene
This purpos and that day they fighte mente;
But on a day wel armed, bright and shene,
Ector, and many a worthy wight out wente,
With spere in hond and bigge bowes bente;
And in the berd, with-oute lenger lette,
Hir fomen in the feld anoon hem mette.
The longe day, with speres sharpe y-grounde,
With arwes, dartes, swerdes, maces felle,
They fighte and bringen hors and man to grounde,
And with hir axes out the braynes quelle.
But in the laste shour, sooth for to telle,
The folk of Troye hem-selven so misledden,
That with the worse at night homward they fledden.
At whiche day was taken Antenor,
Maugre Polydamas or Monesteo,
Santippe, Sarpedon, Polynestor,
Polyte, or eek the Troian daun Ripheo,
And othere lasse folk, as Phebuseo.
So that, for harm, that day the folk of Troye
Dredden to lese a greet part of hir loye.
Of Pryamus was yeve, at Greek requeste,
A tyme of trewe, and tho they gonnen trete,
Hir prisoneres to chaungen, moste and leste,
And for the surplus yeven sommes grete.
This thing anoon was couth in every strete,
Bothe in thassege, in toun, and every-where,
And with the firste it cam to Calkas ere.
Whan Calkas knew this tretis sholde holde,
In consistorie, among the Grekes, sone
He gan in thringe forth, with lordes olde,
And sette him there-as he was wont to done;
And with a chaunged face hem bad a bone,
For love of god, to don that reverence,
To stinte noyse, and yeve him audience.
Thanne seyde he thus, 'lo! lordes myne, I was
Troian, as it is knowen out of drede;
And if that yow remembre, I am Calkas,
That alderfirst yaf comfort to your nede,
And tolde wel how that ye sholden spede.
For dredelees, thorough yow, shal, in a stounde,
Ben Troye y-brend, and beten doun to grounde.
And in what forme, or in what maner wyse
This toun to shende, and al your lust to acheve,
Ye han er this wel herd it me devyse;
This knowe ye, my lordes, as I leve.
And for the Grekes weren me so leve,

I com my-self in my propre persone,
 To teche in this how yow was best to done;
 Havinge un-to my tresour ne my rente
 Right no resport, to respect of your ese.
 Thus al my good I loste and to yow wente,
 Wening in this you, lordes, for to plese.
 But al that los ne doth me no disese.
 I vouche-sauf, as wisly have I loye,
 For you to lese al that I have in Troye,
 Save of a doughter, that I lafte, allas!
 Slepinge at hoom, whanne out of Troye I sterte.
 O sterne, O cruel fader that I was!
 How mighte I have in that so hard an herte?
 Allas! I ne hadde y-brought hir in hir sherte!
 For sorwe of which I wol not live to morwe,
 But-if ye lordes rewe up-on my sorwe.
 For, by that cause I say no tyme er now
 Hir to deliver, I holden have my pees;
 But now or never, if that it lyke yow,
 I may hir have right sone, doutelees.
 O help and grace! amonges al this prees,
 Rewe on this olde caitif in destresse,
 Sin I through yow have al this hevynesse!
 Ye have now caught and fetered in prisoun
 Troians y-nowe; and if your willes be,
 My child with oon may have redempcioun.
 Now for the love of god and of bountee,
 Oon of so fele, allas! so yeve him me.
 What nede were it this preyere for to werne,
 Sin ye shul bothe han folk and toun as yerne?
 On peril of my lyf, I shal not lye,
 Appollo hath me told it feithfully;
 I have eek founde it by astronomye,
 By sort, and by augurie eek trewely,
 And dar wel seye, the tyme is faste by,
 That fyr and flaumbe on al the toun shal sprede;
 And thus shal Troye turne in asshen dede.
 For certeyn, Phebus and Neptunus bothe,
 That makeden the walles of the toun,
 Ben with the folk of Troye alwey so wrothe,
 That thei wol bringe it to confusioun,
 Right in despyt of king Lameadoun.
 By-cause he nolde payen hem hir hyre,
 The toun of Troye shal ben set on-fyre.
 Telling his tale alwey, this olde greye,
 Humble in speche, and in his lokinge eke,
 The salte teres from his eyen tweye
 Ful faste ronnen doun by eyther cheke.
 So longe he gan of socour hem by-seke
 That, for to hele him of his sorwes sore,
 They yave him Antenor, with-oute more.
 But who was glad y-nough but Calkas tho?
 And of this thing ful sone his nedes leyde
 On hem that sholden for the tretis go,
 And hem for Antenor ful ofte preyde

To bringen hoom king Toas and Criseyde;
And whan Pryam his save-garde sente,
Thembassadours to Troye streyght they wente.
The cause y-told of hir cominge, the olde
Pryam the king ful sone in general
Let here-upon his parlement to holde,
Of which the effect rehersen yow I shal.
Thembassadours ben answered for fynal,
Theschaunge of prisoners and al this nede
Hem lyketh wel, and forth in they procede.
This Troilus was present in the place,
Whan axed was for Antenor Criseyde,
For which ful sone chaungen gan his face,
As he that with tho wordes wel neigh deyde.
But nathelees, he no word to it seyde,
Lest men sholde his affeccoun espye;
With mannes herte he gan his sorwes drye.
And ful of anguish and of grisly drede
Abood what lordes wolde un-to it seye;
And if they wolde graunte, as god forbede,
Theschaunge of hir, than thoughte he thinges tweye,
First, how to save hir honour, and what weye
He mighte best theschaunge of hir withstonde;
Ful faste he caste how al this mighte stonde.
Love him made al prest to doon hir byde,
And rather dye than she sholde go;
But resoun seyde him, on that other syde,
'With-oute assent of hir ne do not so,
Lest for thy werk she wolde be thy fo,
And seyn, that thorough thy medling is y-blowe
Your bother love, there it was erst unknowe.'
For which he gan deliberen, for the beste,
That though the lordes wolde that she wente,
He wolde late hem graunte what hem leste,
And telle his lady first what that they mente.
And whan that she had seyde him hir entente,
Ther-after wolde he werken also blyve,
Though al the world ayein it wolde stryve.
Ector, which that wel the Grekes herde,
For Antenor how they wolde han Criseyde,
Gan it withstonde, and sobrelly answerde:—
'Sires, she nis no prisoner,' he seyde;
'I noot on yow who that this charge leyde,
But, on my part, ye may eft-sone him telle,
We usen here no wommen for to selle.'
The noyse of peple up-stirte thanne at ones,
As breme as blase of straw y-set on fyre;
For infortune it wolde, for the nones,
They sholden hir confusioun desyre.
'Ector,' quod they, 'what goost may yow enspyre,
This womman thus to shilde and doon us lese
Daun Antenor?—a wrong wey now ye chese—
That is so wys, and eek so bold baroun,
And we han nede of folk, as men may see;
He is eek oon, the grettest of this toun;

O Ector, lat tho fantasyës be!
 O king Pryam, 'quod they, 'thus seggen we,
 That al our voys is to for-gon Criseyde;
 And to deliveren Antenor they preyde.
 O Iuvenal, lord! trewe is thy sentence,
 That litel witen folk what is to yerne
 That they ne finde in hir desyr offence;
 For cloud of errour lat hem not descerne
 What best is; and lo, here ensample as yerne.
 This folk desiren now deliveraunce
 Of Antenor, that broughte hem to mischaunce!
 For he was after traytour to the toun
 Of Troye; alas! they quitte him out to rathe;
 O nyce world, lo, thy discrecioun!
 Criseyde, which that never dide hem skathe,
 Shal now no lenger in hir blisse bathe;
 But Antenor, he shal com hoom to toun,
 And she shal out; thus seyden here and howne.
 For which delibered was by parlement,
 For Antenor to yelden up Criseyde,
 And it pronounced by the president,
 Al-theigh that Ector 'nay' ful ofte preyde.
 And fynaly, what wight that it with-seyde,
 It was for nought, it moste been, and sholde;
 For substaunce of the parlement it wolde.
 Departed out of parlement echone,
 This Troilus, with-oute wordes mo,
 Un-to his chaumbre spedde him faste allone,
 But-if it were a man of his or two,
 The whiche he bad out faste for to go,
 By-cause he wolde slepen, as he seyde,
 And hastely up-on his bed him leyde.
 And as in winter leves been biraft,
 Eche after other, til the tree be bare,
 So that ther nis but bark and braunche y-laft,
 Lyth Troilus, biraft of ech wel-fare,
 Y-bounden in the blake bark of care,
 Disposed wood out of his wit to breyde,
 So sore him sat the chaunginge of Criseyde.
 He rist him up, and every dore he shette
 And windowe eek, and tho this sorweful man
 Up-on his beddes syde a-doun him sette,
 Ful lyk a deed image pale and wan;
 And in his brest the heped wo bigan
 Out-breste, and he to werken in this wyse
 In his woodnesse, as I shal yow devyse.
 Right as the wilde bole biginneth springe
 Now here, now there, y-darted to the herte,
 And of his deeth roreth in compleyninge,
 Right so gan he aboute the chaumbre sterte,
 Smyting his brest ay with his festes smerte;
 His heed to the wal, his body to the grounde
 Ful ofte he swapte, him-selven to confounde.
 His eyen two, for pitee of his herte,
 Out stremeden as swifte welles tweye;

The heighe sobbes of his sorwes smerte
His speche him rafte, unnethes mighte he seye,
'O deeth, allas! why niltow do me deye?
A-cursed be the day which that nature
Shoop me to ben a lyves creature!
But after, whan the furie and the rage
Which that his herte twiste and faste threste,
By lengthe of tyme somewhat gan asswage,
Up-on his bed he leyde him doun to reste;
But tho bigonne his teres more out-breste,
That wonder is, the body may suffyse
To half this wo, which that I yow devyse.
Than seyde he thus, 'Fortune! allas the whye!
What have I doon, what have I thus a-gilt?
How mightestow for reuthe me bigyle?
Is ther no grace, and shal I thus be spilt?
Shal thus Criseyde away, for that thou wilt?
Allas! how maystow in thyn herte finde
To been to me thus cruel and unkinde?
Have I thee nought honoured al my lyve,
As thou wel wost, above the goddes alle?
Why wiltow me fro loye thus depryve?
O Troilus, what may men now thee calle
But wrecche of wrecches, out of honour falle
In-to miserie, in which I wol biwayle
Criseyde, allas! til that the breeth me fayle?
Allas, Fortune! if that my lyf in loye
Displedes hadde un-to thy foule envye,
Why ne haddestow my fader, king of Troye,
By-raft the lyf, or doon my bretheren dye,
Or slayn my-self, that thus compleyne and crye,
I, combre-world, that may of no-thing serve,
But ever dye, and never fully sterve?
If that Criseyde allone were me laft,
Nought roughete I whider thou woldest me stere;
And hir, allas! than hastow me biraft.
But ever-more, lo! this is thy manere,
To reve a wight that most is to him dere,
To preve in that thy gerful violence.
Thus am I lost, ther helpeth no defence!
O verray lord of love, O god, allas!
That knowest best myn herte and al my thought,
What shal my sorwful lyf don in this cas
If I for-go that I so dere have bought?
Sin ye Cryseyde and me han fully brought
In-to your grace, and bothe our hertes seled,
How may ye suffre, allas! it be repeled?
What I may doon, I shal, whyl I may dure
On lyve in torment and in cruel peyne,
This infortune or this disaventure,
Allone as I was born, y-wis, compleyne;
Ne never wil I seen it shyne or reyne;
But ende I wil, as Edippe, in derknesse
My sorwful lyf, and dyen in distresse.
O wery goost, that errest to and fro,

Why niltow fleen out of the wofulleste
 Body, that ever mighte on grounde go?
 O soule, lurking in this wo, unneste,
 Flee forth out of myn herte, and lat it breste,
 And folwe alwey Criseyde, thy lady dere;
 Thy righte place is now no lenger here!
 O wofulle eyen two, sin your disport
 Was al to seen Criseydes eyen brighte,
 What shal ye doon but, for my discomfort,
 Stonden for nought, and wepen out your sighte?
 Sin she is queynt, that wont was yow to lighte,
 In veyn fro-this-forth have I eyen tweye
 Y-formed, sin your vertue is a-weye.
 O my Criseyde, O lady sovereyne
 Of thilke woful soule that thus cryeth,
 Who shal now yeven comfort to the peyne?
 Allas, no wight; but when myn herte dyeth,
 My spirit, which that so un-to yow hyeth,
 Receyve in gree, for that shal ay yow serve;
 For-thy no fors is, though the body sterve.
 O ye loveres, that heighe upon the wheel
 Ben set of Fortune, in good aventure,
 God leve that ye finde ay love of steel,
 And longe mot your lyf in Ioye endure!
 But whan ye comen by my sepulture,
 Remembreth that your felawe resteth there;
 For I lovede eek, though I unworthy were.
 O olde unholysom and mislyved man,
 Calkas I mene, allas! what eyleth thee
 To been a Greek, sin thou art born Troian?
 O Calkas, which that wilt my bane be,
 In cursed tyme was thou born for me!
 As wolde blisful Iove, for his Ioye,
 That I thee hadde, where I wolde, in Troye!
 A thousand sykes, hottere than the glede,
 Out of his brest ech after other wente,
 Medled with pleyntes newe, his wo to fede,
 For which his woful teres never stente;
 And shortly, so his peynes him to-rente,
 And wex so mat, that Ioye nor penaunce
 He feleth noon, but lyth forth in a traunce.
 Pandare, which that in the parlement
 Hadde herd what every lord and burgeys seyde,
 And how ful graunted was, by oon assent,
 For Antenor to yelden so Criseyde,
 Gan wel neigh wood out of his wit to breyde,
 So that, for wo, he niste what he mente;
 But in a rees to Troilus he wente.
 A certeyn knight, that for the tyme kepte
 The chaumbre-dore, un-dide it him anoon;
 And Pandare, that ful tendreliche wepte,
 In-to the derke chaumbre, as stille as stoon,
 Toward the bed gan softly to goon,
 So confus, that he niste what to seye;
 For verray wo his wit was neigh aweye.

And with his chere and loking al to-torn,
For sorwe of this, and with his armes folden,
He stood this woful Troilus biforn,
And on his pitous face he gan biholden;
But lord, so often gan his herte colden,
Seing his freend in wo, whos hevinesse
His herte slow, as thoughte him, for distresse.
This woful wight, this Troilus, that felte
His freend Pandare y-comen him to see,
Gan as the snow ayein the sonne melte,
For which this sorwful Pandare, of pitee,
Gan for to wepe as tendrelliche as he;
And specheles thus been thise ilke tweye,
That neyther mighte o word for sorwe seye.
But at the laste this woful Troilus,
Ney deed for smert, gan bresten out to rore,
And with a sorwful noyse he seyde thus,
Among his sobbes and his sykes sore,
'Lo! Pandare, I am deed, with-outen more.
Hastow nought herd at parlement,' he seyde,
'For Antenor how lost is my Criseyde?'
This Pandarus, ful deed and pale of hewe,
Ful pitously answerde and seyde, 'yis!
As wisly were it fals as it is trewe,
That I have herd, and wot al how it is.
O mercy, god, who wolde have trowed this?
Who wolde have wend that, in so litel a throwe,
Fortune our Ioye wolde han over-throwe?
For in this world ther is no creature,
As to my doom, that ever saw ruyne
Straungere than this, thorough cas or aventure.
But who may al eschewe or al devyne?
Swich is this world; for-thy I thus defyne,
Ne trust no wight to finden in Fortune
Ay propretee; hir yeftes been comune.
But tel me this, why thou art now so mad
To sorwen thus? Why lystow in this wyse,
Sin thy desyr al holly hastow had,
So that, by right, it oughte y-now suffyse?
But I, that never felte in my servyse
A frendly chere or loking of an yë,
Lat me thus wepe and wayle, til I dye.
And over al this, as thou wel wost thy-selve,
This town is ful of ladies al aboute;
And, to my doom, fairer than swiche twelve
As ever she was, shal I finde, in som route,
Ye, oon or two, with-outen any doute.
For-thy be glad, myn owene dere brother,
If she be lost, we shul recovere another.
What, god for-bede alwey that ech plesaunce
In o thing were, and in non other wight!
If oon can singe, another can wel daunce;
If this be goodly, she is glad and light;
And this is fayr, and that can good a-right.
Ech for his vertu holden is for dere,

Bothe heroner and faucon for rivere.
 And eek, as writ Zanzis, that was ful wys,
 "The newe love out chaceth ofte the olde;"
 And up-on newe cas lyth newe avys.
 Thenk eek, thy-self to saven artow holde;
 Swich fyr, by proces, shal of kinde colde.
 For sin it is but casuel plesaunce,
 Som cas shal putte it out of remembraunce.
 For al-so seur as day cometh after night,
 The newe love, labour or other wo,
 Or elles selde seinge of a wight,
 Don olde affeccious alle over-go.
 And, for thy part, thou shalt have oon of tho
 To abrigge with thy bittre peynes smerte;
 Absence of hir shal dryve hir out of herte.'
 Thise wordes seyde he for the nones alle,
 To helpe his freend, lest he for sorwe deyde.
 For doutelees, to doon his wo to falle,
 He roughte not what unthrift that he seyde.
 But Troilus, that neigh for sorwe deyde,
 Tok litel hede of al that ever he mente;
 Oon ere it herde, at the other out it wente:—
 But at the laste answerde and seyde, 'freend,
 This lechecraft, or heled thus to be,
 Were wel sitting, if that I were a feend,
 To traysen hir that trewe is unto me!
 I pray god, lat this consayl never y-thee;
 But do me rather sterve anon-right here
 Er I thus do as thou me woldest lere.
 She that I serve, y-wis, what so thou seye,
 To whom myn herte enhabit is by right,
 Shal han me holly hires til that I deye.
 For, Pandarus, sin I have trouthe hir hight,
 I wol not been untrewes for no wight;
 But as hir man I wol ay live and sterve,
 And never other creature serve.
 And ther thou seyst, thou shall as faire finde
 As she, lat be, make no comparisoun
 To creature y-formed here by kinde.
 O leve Pandare, in conclusioun,
 I wol not be of thyn opinioun,
 Touching al this; for whiche I thee biseche,
 So hold thy pees; thou sleest me with thy speche.
 Thow biddest me I sholde love an-other
 Al freshly newe, and lat Criseyde go!
 It lyth not in my power, leve brother.
 And though I mighte, I wolde not do so.
 But canstow pleyen raket, to and fro,
 Nettle in, dokke out, now this, now that, Pandare?
 Now foule falle hir, for thy wo that care!
 Thow farest eek by me, thou Pandarus,
 As he, that whan a wight is wo bi-goon,
 He cometh to him a pas, and seyth right thus,
 "Thenk not on smert, and thou shalt fele noon."
 Thou most me first transmuwen in a stoon,

And reve me my passiounes alle,
Er thou so lightly do my wo to falle.
The deeth may wel out of my brest departe
The lyf, so longe may this sorwe myne;
But fro my soule shal Criseydes darte
Out never-mo; but doun with Proserpyne,
Whan I am deed, I wol go wone in pyne;
And ther I wol eternally compleyne
My wo, and how that twinned be we tweyne.
Thow hast here maad an argument, for fyn,
How that it sholde lasse peyne be
Criseyde to for-goon, for she was myn,
And live in ese and in felicitee.
Why gabbestow, that seydest thus to me
That "him is wors that is fro wele y-throwe,
Than he hadde erst non of that wele y-knowe?"
But tel me now, sin that thee thinketh so light
To chaungen so in love, ay to and fro,
Why hastow not don bisily thy might
To chaungen hir that doth thee al thy wo?
Why niltow lete hir fro thyn herte go?
Why niltow love an-other lady swete,
That may thyn herte setten in quiete?
If thou hast had in love ay yet mischaunce,
And canst it not out of thyn herte dryve,
I, that livede in lust and in plesaunce
With hir as muche as creature on-lyve,
How sholde I that foryete, and that so blyve?
O where hastow ben hid so longe in muwe,
That canst so wel and formely arguwe?
Nay, nay, god wot, nought worth is al thy reed,
For which, for what that ever may bifalle,
With-outen wordes mo, I wol be deed.
O deeth, that endere art of sorwes alle,
Com now, sin I so ofte after thee calle,
For sely is that deeth, soth for to seyne,
That, ofte y-cleped, cometh and endeth peyne.
Wel wot I, whyl my lyf was in quiete,
Er thou me slowe, I wolde have yeven hyre;
But now thy cominge is to me so swete,
That in this world I no-thing so desyre.
O deeth, sin with this sorwe I am a-fyre,
Thou outhur do me anoon in teres drenche,
Or with thy colde strook myn hete quenche!
Sin that thou sleest so fele in sondry wyse
Ayens hir wil, unpreyed, day and night,
Do me, at my requeste, this servyse,
Delivere now the world, so dostow right,
Of me, that am the wofulleste wight
That ever was; for tyme is that I sterve,
Sin in this world of right nought may I serve.'
This Troilus in teres gan distille,
As licour out of alamyk ful faste;
And Pandarus gan holde his tunge stille,
And to the ground his eyen doun he caste.

But nathelees, thus thoughte he at the laste,
 'What, parde, rather than my felawe deye,
 Yet shal I som-what more un-to him seye:'
 And seyde, 'freend, sin thou hast swich distresse,
 And sin thee list myn arguments to blame,
 Why nilt thy-selven helpen doon redresse,
 And with thy manhod letten al this grame?
 Go ravisshe hir ne canstow not for shame!
 And outhir lat hir out of toune fare,
 Or hold hir stille, and leve thy nyce fare.
 Artow in Troye, and hast non hardiment
 To take a womman which that loveth thee,
 And wolde hir-selven been of thyn assent?
 Now is not this a nyce vanitee?
 Rys up anoon, and lat this weping be,
 And kyth thou art a man, for in this houre
 I wil be deed, or she shal bleven oure.'
 To this answerde him Troilus ful softe,
 And seyde, 'parde, leve brother dere,
 Al this have I my-self yet thought ful ofte,
 And more thing than thou devycest here.
 But why this thing is laft, thou shalt wel here;
 And whan thou me hast yeve an audience,
 Ther-after mayst thou telle al thy sentence.
 First, sin thou wost this toun hath al this werre
 For ravissching of wommen so by might,
 It sholde not be suffred me to erre,
 As it stant now, ne doon so gret unright.
 I sholde han also blame of every wight,
 My fadres graunt if that I so withstode,
 Sin she is chaunged for the tounes goode.
 I have eek thought, so it were hir assent,
 To aske hir at my fader, of his grace;
 Than thenke I, this were hir accusement,
 Sin wel I woot I may hir not purchase.
 For sin my fader, in so heigh a place
 As parlement, hath hir eschaunge enseled,
 He nil for me his lettre be repeled.
 Yet drede I most hir herte to pertourbe
 With violence, if I do swich a game;
 For if I wolde it openly distourbe,
 It moste been disclaundre to hir name.
 And me were lever deed than hir defame,
 As nolde god but-if I sholde have
 Hir honour lever than my lyf to save!
 Thus am I lost, for ought that I can see;
 For certeyn is, sin that I am hir knight,
 I moste hir honour levere han than me
 In every cas, as lovere oughte of right.
 Thus am I with desyr and reson twight;
 Desyr for to distourben hir me redeth,
 And reson nil not, so myn herte dredeth.'
 Thus wepinge that he coude never cesse,
 He seyde, 'allas! how shal I, wrecche, fare?
 For wel fele I alwey my love encesse,

And hope is lasse and lasse alwey, Pandare!
Encressen eek the causes of my care;
So wel-a-vey, why nil myn herte breste?
For, as in love, ther is but litel reste.'
Pandare answerde, 'freend, thou mayst, for me,
Don as thee list; but hadde ich it so hote,
And thyn estat, she sholde go with me;
Though al this toun cryede on this thing by note,
I nolde sette at al that noyse a grote.
For when men han wel cryed, than wol they rounne;
A wonder last but nyne night never in toune.
Devyne not in reson ay so depe
Ne curteysly, but help thy-self anon;
Bet is that othere than thy-selven wepe,
And namely, sin ye two been al oon.
Rys up, for by myn heed, she shal not goon;
And rather be in blame a lyte y-founde
Than sterve here as a gnat, with-oute wounde.
It is no shame un-to yow, ne no vyce
Hir to with-holden, that ye loveth most.
Paraunter, she mighte holden thee for nyce
To lete hir go thus to the Grekes ost.
Thenk eek Fortune, as wel thy-selven wost,
Helpeth hardy man to his empryse,
And weyveth wrecches, for hir cowardyse.
And though thy lady wolde a litel hir greve,
Thou shalt thy pees ful wel here-after make,
But as for me, certayn, I can not leve
That she wolde it as now for yvel take.
Why sholde than for ferd thyn herte quake?
Thenk eek how Paris hath, that is thy brother,
A love; and why shaltow not have another?
And Troilus, o thing I dar thee swere,
That if Criseyde, whiche that is thy leef,
Now loveth thee as wel as thou dost here,
God helpe me so, she nil not take a-greef,
Though thou do bote a-noon in this mischeef.
And if she wilneth fro thee for to passe,
Thanne is she fals; so love hir wel the lasse.
For-thy tak herte, and thenk, right as a knight,
Thourgh love is broken alday every lawe.
Kyth now sumwhat thy corage and thy might,
Have mercy on thy-self, for any awe.
Lat not this wrecched wo thin herte gnawe,
But manly set the world on sixe and sevenene;
And, if thou deye a martir, go to hevene.
I wol my-self be with thee at this dede,
Though ich and al my kin, up-on a stounde,
Shulle in a strete as dogges liggen dede,
Thourgh-girt with many a wyd and bloody wounde.
In every cas I wol a freend be founde.
And if thee list here sterven as a wrecche,
A-dieu, the devel spede him that it recche!'
This Troilus gan with tho wordes quiken,
And seyde, 'freend, graunt mercy, ich assente;

But certaynly thou mayst not me so priken,
 Ne peyne noon ne may me so tormente,
 That, for no cas, it is not myn entente,
 At shorte wordes, though I dyen sholde,
 To ravisshe hir, but-if hir-self it wolde.
 'Why, so mene I,' quod Pandarus, 'al this day.
 But tel me than, hastow hir wel assayed,
 That sorwest thus?' And he answerde, 'nay.'
 'Wher-of artow,' quod Pandare, 'than a-mayed,
 That nost not that she wol ben yvel apayed
 To ravisshe hir, sin thou hast not ben there,
 But-if that love tolde it in thyn ere?
 For-thy rys up, as nought ne were, anoon,
 And wash thy face, and to the king thou wende,
 Or he may wondren whider thou art goon.
 Thou most with wisdom him and othere blende;
 Or, up-on cas, he may after thee sende
 Er thou be war; and shortly, brother dere,
 Be glad, and lat me werke in this matere.
 For I shal shape it so, that sikerly
 Thou shalt this night som tyme, in som manere,
 Com speke with thy lady prevely,
 And by hir wordes eek, and by hir chere,
 Thou shalt ful sone aparceyve and wel here
 Al hir entente, and in this cas the beste;
 And fare now wel, for in this point I reste.'
 The swifte Fame, whiche that false thinges
 Egal reporteth lyk the thinges trewe,
 Was thorough-out Troye y-fled with preste winges
 Fro man to man, and made this tale al newe,
 How Calkas doughter, with hir brighte hewe,
 At parlement, with-oute wordes more,
 I-graunted was in chaunge of Antenore.
 The whiche tale anoon-right as Criseyde
 Had herd, she which that of hir fader roughthe,
 As in this cas, right nought, ne whanne he deyde,
 Ful bisily to Iuppiter bisoughthe
 Yeve him mischaunce that this tretis broughte.
 But shortly, lest thise tales sothe were,
 She dorste at no wight asken it, for fere.
 As she that hadde hir herte and al hir minde
 On Troilus y-set so wonder faste,
 That al this world ne mighte hir love unbinde,
 Ne Troilus out of hir herte caste;
 She wol ben his, whyl that hir lyf may laste.
 And thus she brenneth bothe in love and drede,
 So that she niste what was best to rede.
 But as men seen in toune, and al aboute,
 That wommen usen frendes to visyte,
 So to Criseyde of wommen com a route
 For pitous loye, and wenden hir delyte;
 And with hir tales, dere y-nough a myte,
 These wommen, whiche that in the cite dwelle,
 They sette hem down, and seyde as I shal telle.
 Quod first that oon, 'I am glad, trewely,

By-cause of yow, that shal your fader see.'
A-nother seyde, 'y-wis, so nam not I;
For al to litel hath she with us be.'
Quod tho the thridde, 'I hope, y-wis, that she
Shal bringen us the pees on every syde,
That, whan she gooth, almighty god hir gyde!'
Tho wordes and tho wommannisshe thinges,
She herde hem right as though she thennes were;
For, god it wot, hir herte on other thing is,
Although the body sat among hem there.
Hir advertence is alwey elles-where;
For Troilus ful faste hir soule soughte;
With-outen word, alwey on him she thoughte.
Thise wommen, that thus wenden hir to plesse,
Aboute nought gonne alle hir tales spende;
Swich vanitee ne can don hir non ese,
As she that, al this mene whyle, brende
Of other passioun than that they wende,
So that she felte almost hir herte deye
For wo, and wery of that companye.
For which no lenger mighte she restreyne
Hir teres, so they gonnen up to welle,
That yeven signes of the bitter payne
In whiche hir spirit was, and moste dwelle;
Remembring hir, fro heven unto which helle
She fallen was, sith she forgoth the sighte
Of Troilus, and sorowfully she sighte.
And thilke foles sittinge hir aboute
Wenden, that she wepte and syked sore
By-cause that she sholde out of that route
Depart, and never pleye with hem more.
And they that hadde y-knowen hir of yore
Seye hir so wepe, and thoughte it kindenesse,
And eche of hem wepte eek for hir distresse;
And bisily they gonnen hir conforten
Of thing, god wot, on which she litel thoughte;
And with hir tales wenden hir disporten,
And to be glad they often hir bisoughte.
But swich an ese ther-with they hir wroughte
Right as a man is esed for to fele,
For ache of heed, to clawen him on his hele!
But after al this nyce vanitee
They took hir leve, and hoom they wenten alle.
Criseyde, ful of sorweful pitee,
In-to hir chaumbre up wente out of the halle,
And on hir bed she gan for deed to falle,
In purpos never thennes for to ryse;
And thus she wroughte, as I shal yow devyse.
Hir ounded heer, that sonnish was of hewe,
She rente, and eek hir fingres longe and smale
She wrong ful ofte, and bad god on hir rewe,
And with the deeth to doon bote on hir bale.
Hir hewe, whylom bright, that tho was pale,
Bar witnes of hir wo and hir constreynte;
And thus she spak, sobbinge, in hir compleynte:

'Alas!' quod she, 'out of this regioun
 I, woful wrecche and infortuned wight,
 And born in corsed constellacioun,
 Mot goon, and thus departen fro my knight;
 Wo worth, allas! that ilke dayes light
 On which I saw him first with eyen tweyne,
 That causeth me, and I him, al this peyne!'

Therwith the teres from hir eyen two
 Doun fille, as shour in Aperill, ful swythe;
 Hir whyte brest she bet, and for the wo
 After the deeth she cryed a thousand sythe,
 Sin he that wont hir wo was for to lythe,
 She mot for-goon; for which disaventure
 She held hir-self a forlost creature.

She seyde, 'how shal he doon, and I also?
 How sholde I live, if that I from him twinne?
 O dere herte eek, that I love so,
 Who shal that sorwe sleen that ye ben inne?
 O Calkas, fader, thyn be al this sinne!
 O moder myn, that cleped were Argyve,
 Wo worth that day that thou me bere on lyve!
 To what fyn sholde I live and sorwen thus?
 How sholde a fish with-out water dure?
 What is Criseyde worth, from Troilus?
 How sholde a plaunte or lyves creature
 Live, with-out his kinde noriture?
 For which ful oft a by-word here I seye,
 That, "rotelees, mot grene sone deye."
 I shal don thus, sin neither swerd ne darte
 Dar I non handle, for the crueltee,
 That ilke day that I from yow departe,
 If sorwe of that nil not my bane be,
 Than shal no mete or drinke come in me
 Til I my soule out of my breste unshethe;
 And thus my-selven wol I do to dethe.

And, Troilus, my clothes everichoon
 Shul blake been, in tokeninge, herte swete,
 That I am as out of this world agoon,
 That wont was yow to setten in quiete;
 And of myn ordre, ay til deeth me mete,
 The observaunce ever, in your absence,
 Shal sorwe been, compleynte, and abstinence.

Myn herte and eek the woful goost ther-inne
 Biquethe I, with your spirit to compleyne
 Eternally, for they shul never twinne.
 For though in erthe y-twinned be we tweyne,
 Yet in the feld of pitee, out of peyne,
 That hight Elysos, shul we been y-fere,
 As Orpheus and Erudice his fere.

Thus herte myn, for Antenor, allas!
 I sone shal be chaunged, as I wene.
 But how shul ye don in this sorwful cas,
 How shal your tendre herte this sustene?
 But herte myn, for-yet this sorwe and tene,
 And me also; for, soothly for to seye,

So ye wel fare, I recche not to deye.
How mighte it ever y-red ben or y-songe,
The pleynte that she made in hir distresse?
I noot; but, as for me, my litel tonge,
If I discreven wolde hir hevynesse,
It sholde make hir sorwe seme lesse
Than that it was, and childishly deface
Hir heigh compleynte, and therfore I it pace.
Pandare, which that sent from Troilus
Was to Criseyde, as ye han herd devyse,
That for the beste it was accorded thus,
And he ful glad to doon him that servyse,
Un-to Criseyde, in a ful secree wyse,
Ther-as she lay in torment and in rage,
Com hir to telle al hoolly his message.
And fond that she hir-selven gan to trete
Ful pitously; for with hir salte teres
Hir brest, hir face y-bathed was ful wete;
The mighty tresses of hir sonnish heres,
Unbroyden, hangen al aboute hir eres;
Which yaf him verray signal of martyre
Of deeth, which that hir herte gan desyre.
Whan she him saw, she gan for sorwe anoon
Hir tery face a-twixe hir armes hyde,
For which this Pandare is so wo bi-goon,
That in the hous he mighte unnethe abyde,
As he that pitee felte on every syde.
For if Criseyde hadde erst compleyned sore,
Tho gan she pleyne a thousand tymes more.
And in hir aspre pleynte than she seyde,
'Pandare first of Ioyes mo than two
Was cause causinge un-to me, Criseyde,
That now transmuwed been in cruel wo.
Wher shal I seye to yow "wel come" or no,
That alderfirst me broughte in-to servyse
Of love, allas! that endeth in swich wyse?
Endeth than love in wo? Ye, or men lyeth!
And alle worldly blisse, as thinketh me,
The ende of blisse ay sorwe it occupyeth;
And who-so troweth not that it so be,
Lat him upon me, woful wrecche, y-see,
That my-self hate, and ay my birthe acorse,
Felingge alwey, fro wikke I go to worse.
Who-so me seeth, he seeth sorwe al at ones,
Payne, torment, pleynte, wo, distresse.
Out of my woful body harm ther noon is,
As anguish, langour, cruel bitterness,
A-noy, smert, drede, fury, and eek siknesse.
I trowe, y-wis, from hevene teres reyne,
For pitee of myn aspre and cruel peyne!'
'And thou, my suster, ful of discomfort,'
Quod Pandarus, 'what thenkestow to do?
Why ne hastow to thy-selven som resport,
Why woltow thus thy-selve, allas, for-do?
Leef al this werk and tak now hede to

That I shal seyn, and herkne, of good entente,
 This, which by me thy Troilus thee sente.
 Torned hir tho Criseyde, a wo makinge
 So greet that it a deeth was for to see:—
 'Allas!' quod she, 'what wordes may ye bringe?
 What wol my dere herte seyn to me,
 Which that I drede never-mo to see?
 Wol he have pleynte or teres, er I wende?
 I have y-nowe, if he ther-after sende!'
 She was right swich to seen in hir visage
 As is that wight that men on bere binde;
 Hir face, lyk of Paradys the image,
 Was al y-chaunged in another kinde.
 The pleye, the laughtre men was wont to finde
 In hir, and eek hir Ioyes everychone,
 Ben fled, and thus lyth now Criseyde allone.
 Aboute hir eyen two a purple ring
 Bi-trent, in sothfast tokninge of hir peyne,
 That to biholde it was a dedly thing,
 For which Pandare mighte not restreyne
 The teres from his eyen for to reyne.
 But nathelees, as he best mighte, he seyde
 From Troilus thise wordes to Criseyde.
 'Lo, nece, I trowe ye han herd al how
 The king, with othere lordes, for the beste,
 Hath mad eschaunge of Antenor and yow,
 That cause is of this sorwe and this unreste.
 But how this cas doth Troilus moleste,
 That may non erthely mannes tonge seye;
 For verray wo his wit is al aweye.
 For which we han so sorwed, he and I,
 That in-to litel bothe it hadde us slawe;
 But thurgh my conseil this day, fynally,
 He somewhat is fro weping now with-drawe.
 And semeth me that he desyreth fawe
 With yow to been al night, for to devyse
 Remede in this, if ther were any wyse.
 This, short and pleyne, theeffect of my message,
 As ferforth as my wit can comprehende.
 For ye, that been of torment in swich rage,
 May to no long prologe as now entende;
 And her-upon ye may answer him sende.
 And, for the love of god, my nece dere,
 So leef this wo er Troilus be here.'
 'Gret is my wo,' quod she, and sighte sore,
 As she that feleth dedly sharp distresse;
 'But yet to me his sorwe is muchel more,
 That love him bet than he him-self, I gesse.
 Allas! for me hath he swich hevinesse?
 Can he for me so pitously compleyne?
 Y-wis, this sorwe doubleth al my peyne.
 Grevous to me, god wot, is for to twinne,'
 Quod she, 'but yet it hardere is to me
 To seen that sorwe which that he is inne;
 For wel wot I, it wol my bane be;

And deye I wol in certayn,' tho quod she;
'But bidde him come, er deeth, that thus me threteth,
Dryve out that goost, which in myn herte beteth.'
Thise wordes seyde, she on hir armes two
Fil gruf, and gan to wepe pitously.
Quod Pandarus, 'allas! why do ye so,
Syn wel ye wot the tyme is faste by,
That he shal come? Arys up hastely,
That he yow nat biwopen thus ne finde,
But ye wol han him wood out of his minde!
For wiste he that ye ferde in this manere,
He wolde him-selve slee; and if I wende
To han this fare, he sholde not come here
For al the good that Pryam may despende.
For to what fyn he wolde anoon pretende,
That knowe I wel; and for-thy yet I seye,
So leef this sorwe, or platly he wol deye.
And shapeth yow his sorwe for to abregge,
And nought encresse, leve nece swete;
Beth rather to him cause of flat than egge,
And with som wysdom ye his sorwes bete.
What helpeth it to wepen ful a strete,
Or though ye bothe in salte teres dreynte?
Bet is a tyme of cure ay than of pleynte.
I mene thus; whan I him hider bringe,
Sin ye ben wyse, and bothe of oon assent,
So shapeth how distourbe your goinge,
Or come ayen, sone after ye be went.
Wommen ben wyse in short avysement;
And lat sen how your wit shal now avayle;
And what that I may helpe, it shal not fayle.'
'Go,' quod Criseyde, 'and uncle, trewely,
I shal don al my might, me to restreyne
From weping in his sight, and bisily,
Him for to glade, I shal don al my peyne,
And in myn herte seken every veyne;
If to this soor ther may be founden salve,
It shal not lakken, certain, on myn halve.'
Goth Pandarus, and Troilus he soughte,
Til in a temple he fond him allone,
As he that of his lyf no lenger roughete;
But to the pitouse goddes everichone
Ful tendrely he preyde, and made his mone,
To doon him sone out of this world to pace;
For wel he thoughte ther was non other grace.
And shortly, al the sothe for to seye,
He was so fallen in despeyr that day,
That outrely he shoop him for to deye.
For right thus was his argument alwey:
He seyde, he nas but loren, waylawey!
'For al that comth, comth by necessitee;
Thus to be lorn, it is my destinee.
For certaynly, this wot I wel,' he seyde,
That for-sight of divyne purveyaunce
Hath seyn alwey me to for-gon Criseyde,

Sin god seeth every thing, out of doutaunce,
 And hem desponeth, thourgh his ordenaunce,
 In hir merytes sothly for to be,
 As they shul comen by predestinee.
 But nathelees, allas! whom shal I leve?
 For ther ben grete clerkes many oon,
 That destinee thorough argumentes preve;
 And som men seyn that nedely ther is noon;
 But that free chois is yeven us everichoon.
 O, welaway! so sleye arn clerkes olde,
 That I not whos opinion I may holde.
 For som men seyn, if god seth al biforn,
 Ne god may not deceyved ben, pardee,
 Than moot it fallen, though men hadde it sworn,
 That purveyaunce hath seyn bifore to be.
 Wherfor I seye, that from eterne if he
 Hath wist biforn our thought eek as our dede,
 We have no free chois, as these clerkes rede.
 For other thought nor other dede also
 Might never be, but swich as purveyaunce,
 Which may not ben deceyved never-mo,
 Hath feled biforn, with-outen ignoraunce.
 For if ther mighte been a variaunce
 To wrythen out fro goddes purveyinge,
 Ther nere no prescience of thing cominge;
 But it were rather an opinioun
 Uncerteyn, and no stedfast forseinge;
 And certes, that were an abusioun,
 That god shuld han no parfit cleer witinge
 More than we men that han doutous weninge.
 But swich an errour up-on god to gesse
 Were fals and foul, and wikked corsednesse.
 Eek this is an opinioun of somme
 That han hir top ful heighe and smothe y-shore;
 They seyn right thus, that thing is not to come
 For that the prescience hath seyn bifore
 That it shal come; but they seyn, that therfore
 That it shal come, therfore the purveyaunce
 Wot it biforn with-outen ignoraunce;
 And in this manere this necessitee
 Retorneth in his part contrarie agayn.
 For needfully bihoveth it not to be
 That thilke thinges fallen in certayn
 That ben purveyed; but nedely, as they seyn,
 Bihoveth it that thinges, whiche that falle,
 That they in certayn ben purveyed alle.
 I mene as though I laboured me in this,
 To enqueren which thing cause of which thing be;
 As whether that the prescience of god is
 The certayn cause of the necessitee
 Of thinges that to comen been, pardee;
 Or if necessitee of thing cominge
 Be cause certeyn of the purveyinge.
 But now ne enforce I me nat in shewing
 How the ordre of causes stant; but wel wot I,

That it bihoveth that the bifallinge
Of thinges wist biforen certeynly
Be necessarie, al seme it not ther-by
That prescience put falling necessaire
To thing to come, al falle it foule or faire.
For if ther sit a man yond on a see,
Than by necessitee bihoveth it
That, certes, thyn opinioun soth be,
That wenest or coniectest that he sit;
And ferther-over now ayenward yit,
Lo, right so it is of the part contrarie,
As thus; (now herkne, for I wol not tarie):
I seye, that if the opinioun of thee
Be sooth, for that he sit, than seye I this,
That he mot sitten by necessitee;
And thus necessitee in either is.
For in him nede of sitting is, y-wis,
And in thee nede of sooth; and thus, forsothe,
Ther moot necessitee ben in yow bothe.
But thou mayst seyn, the man sit not therfore,
That thyn opinion of sitting soth is;
But rather, for the man sit ther bifore,
Therfore is thyn opinion sooth, y-wis.
And I seye, though the cause of sooth of this
Comth of his sitting, yet necessitee
Is entrechaunged, bothe in him and thee.
Thus on this same wyse, out of doutaunce,
I may wel maken, as it semeth me,
My resoninge of goddes purveyaunce,
And of the thinges that to comen be;
By whiche reson men may wel y-see,
That thilke thinges that in erthe falle,
That by necessitee they comen alle.
For al-though that, for thing shal come, y-wis,
Therfore is it purveyed, certaynly,
Nat that it comth for it purveyed is:
Yet nathelees, bihoveth it nedfully,
That thing to come be purveyed, trewely;
Or elles, thinges that purveyed be,
That they bityden by necessitee.
And this suffyseth right y-now, certeyn,
For to destroye our free chois every del.—
But now is this abusio[n] to seyn,
That fallinge of the thinges temporel
Is cause of goddes prescience eternal.
Now trewely, that is a fals sentence,
That thing to come sholde cause his prescience.
What mighte I wene, and I hadde swich a thought,
But that god purveyth thing that is to come
For that it is to come, and elles nought?
So mighte I wene that thinges alle and some,
That whylom been bifalle and over-come,
Ben cause of thilke sovereyn purveyaunce,
That for-wot al with-outen ignoraunce.
And over al this, yet seye I more herto,

That right as whan I woot ther is a thing,
 Y-wis, that thing mot nedefully be so;
 Eek right so, whan I woot a thing coming,
 So mot it come; and thus the bifalling
 Of thinges that ben wist bfore the tyde,
 They mowe not been eschewed on no syde.
 Than seyde he thus, 'almighty Iove in trone,
 That wost of al this thing the soothfastnesse,
 Rewe on my sorwe, or do me deye sone,
 Or bring Criseyde and me fro this distresse.
 And whyl he was in al this hevinesse,
 Disputinge with him-self in this matere,
 Com Pandare in, and seyde as ye may here.
 'O mighty god,' quod Pandarus, 'in trone,
 Ey! who seigh ever a wys man faren so?
 Why, Troilus, what thenkestow to done?
 Hastow swich lust to been thyn owene fo?
 What, parde, yet is not Criseyde a-go!
 Why lust thee so thy-self for-doon for drede,
 That in thyn heed thyn eyen semen dede?
 Hastow not lived many a yeer biforn
 With-uten hir, and ferd ful wel at ese?
 Artow for hir and for non other born?
 Hath kinde thee wroughte al-only hir to plese?
 Lat be, and thenk right thus in thy disese.
 That, in the dees right as ther fallen chaunces,
 Right so in love, ther come and goon plesaunces.
 And yet this is a wonder most of alle,
 Why thou thus sorwest, sin thou nost not yit,
 Touching hir goinge, how that it shal falle,
 Ne if she can hir-self disturben it.
 Thou hast not yet assayed al hir wit.
 A man may al by tyme his nekke bede
 Whan it shal of, and sorwen at the nede.
 For-thy take hede of that that I shal seye;
 I have with hir y-spoke and longe y-be,
 So as accorded was bitwixe us tweye.
 And ever-mo me thinketh thus, that she
 Hath som-what in hir hertes prevetee,
 Wher-with she can, if I shal right arede,
 Distorbe al this, of which thou art in drede.
 For which my counseil is, whan it is night,
 Thou to hir go, and make of this an ende;
 And blisful Iuno, thourgh hir grete mighte,
 Shal, as I hope, hir grace un-to us sende.
 Myn herte seyth, "certeyn, she shal not wende;"
 And for-thy put thyn herte a whyle in reste;
 And hold this purpos, for it is the beste.'
 This Troilus answerde, and sighte sore,
 'Thou seyst right wel, and I wil do right so;
 And what him liste, he seyde un-to it more.
 And whan that it was tyme for to go,
 Ful prevely him-self, with-uten mo,
 Un-to hir com, as he was wont to done;
 And how they wroughte, I shal yow telle sone.

Soth is, that whan they gonne first to mete,
So gan the peyne hir hertes for to twiste,
That neither of hem other mighte grete,
But hem in armes toke and after kiste.
The lasse wofulle of hem bothe niste
Wher that he was, ne mighte o word out-bringe,
As I seyde erst, for wo and for sobbinge.
Tho woful teres that they leten falle
As bittre weren, out of teres kinde,
For peyne, as is ligne aloës or galle.
So bittre teres weep nought, as I finde,
The woful Myrra through the bark and rinde.
That in this world ther nis so hard an herte,
That nolde han rewed on hir peynes smerte.
But whan hir woful wery gostes tweyne
Retorned been ther-as hem oughte dwelle,
And that som-what to wayken gan the peyne
By lengthe of pleynte, and ebben gan the welle
Of hire teres, and the herte unswelle,
With broken voys, al hoors for-shright, Criseyde
To Troilus thise ilke wordes seyde:
'O love, I deye, and mercy I beseche!
Help, Troilus!' and ther-with-al hir face
Upon his brest she leyde, and loste speche;
Hir woful spirit from his propre place,
Right with the word, alwey up poynt to pace.
And thus she lyth with hewes pale and grene,
That whylom fresh and fairest was to sene.
This Troilus, that on hir gan biholde,
Clepinge hir name, (and she lay as for deed,
With-oute answeere, and felte hir limes colde,
Hir eyen throwen upward to hir heed),
This sorwful man can now noon other reed,
But ofte tyme hir colde mouth he kiste;
Wher him was wo, god and him-self it wiste!
He rist him up, and long streight he hir leyde;
For signe of lyf, for ought he can or may,
Can he noon finde in no-thing on Criseyde,
For which his song ful ofte is 'weylaway!'
But whan he saugh that specheles she lay,
With sorwful voys, and herte of blisse al bare,
He seyde how she was fro this world y-fare!
So after that he longe hadde hir compleyned,
His hondes wrong, and seyde that was to seye,
And with his teres salte hir brest bireyned,
He gan tho teris wyppen of ful dreye,
And pitously gan for the soule preye,
And seyde, 'O lord, that set art in thy trone,
Rewe eek on me, for I shal folwe hir sone!'
She cold was and with-outen sentement,
For aught he woot, for breeth ne felte he noon;
And this was him a preignant argument
That she was forth out of this world agoon;
And whan he seigh ther was non other woon,
He gan hir limes dresse in swich manere

As men don hem that shul be leyd on bere.
 And after this, with sterne and cruel herte,
 His swerd a-noon out of his shethe he twichte,
 Him-self to sleen, how sore that him smerte,
 So that his sowle hir sowle folwen mighte,
 Ther-as the doom of Mynos wolde it dighte;
 Sin love and cruel Fortune it ne wolde,
 That in this world he lenger liven sholde.
 Thanne seyde he thus, fulfild of heigh desdayn,
 'O cruel Iove, and thou, Fortune adverse,
 This al and som, that falsly have ye slayn
 Criseyde, and sin ye may do me no werse,
 Fy on your might and werkes so diverse!
 Thus cowardly ye shul me never winne;
 Ther shal no deeth me fro my lady twinne.
 For I this world, sin ye han slayn hir thus,
 Wol lete, and folowe hir spirit lowe or hye;
 Shal never lover seyn that Troilus
 Dar not, for fere, with his lady dye;
 For certeyn, I wol bere hir companye.
 But sin ye wol not suffre us liven here,
 Yet suffreth that our soules ben y-fere.
 And thou, citee, whiche that I leve in wo,
 And thou, Pryam, and bretheren al y-fere,
 And thou, my moder, farewell! for I go;
 And Attropos, make redy thou my bere!
 And thou, Criseyde, o swete herte dere,
 Receyve now my spirit!' wolde he seye,
 With swerd at herte, al redy for to deye.
 But as god wolde, of swough ther-with she abreyde,
 And gan to syke, and 'Troilus' she cryde;
 And he answerde, 'lady myn Criseyde,
 Live ye yet?' and leet his swerd down glyde.
 'Ye, herte myn, that thanked be Cupyde!'
 Quod she, and ther-with-al she sore sighte;
 And he bigan to glade hir as he mighte;
 Took hir in armes two, and kiste hir ofte,
 And hir to glade he dide al his entente;
 For which hir goost, that flikered ay on-lofte,
 In-to hir woful herte ayein it wente.
 But at the laste, as that hir eyen glente
 A-syde, anoon she gan his swerd aspye,
 As it lay bare, and gan for fere crye,
 And asked him, why he it hadde out-drawe?
 And Troilus anoon the cause hir tolde,
 And how himself ther-with he wolde have slawe.
 For which Criseyde up-on him gan biholde,
 And gan him in hir armes faste folde,
 And seyde, 'O mercy, god, lo, which a dede!
 Allas! how neigh we were bothe dede!
 Thanne if I ne hadde spoken, as grace was,
 Ye wolde han slayn your-self anoon?' quod she.
 'Ye, douteless;' and she answerde, 'allas!
 For, by that ilke lord that made me,
 I nolde a forlong wey on-lyve han be,

After your deeth, to han be crowned quene
Of al the lond the sonne on shyneth shene.
But with this selve swerd, which that here is,
My-selve I wolde have slayn!'—quod she tho;
'But ho, for we han right y-now of this,
And late us ryse and streight to bedde go;
And therē lat vs speken of our wo.
For, by the mortar which that I see brenne,
Knowe I ful wel that day is not fer henne.'
Whan they were in hir bedde, in armes folde,
Nought was it lyk tho nightes here-biforn;
For pitously ech other gan biholde,
As they that hadden al hir blisse y-lorn,
Biwaylinge ay the day that they were born.
Til at the last this sorwful wight Criseyde
To Troilus these ilke wordes seyde:—
'Lo, herte myn, wel wot ye this,' quod she,
'That if a wight alwey his wo compleyne,
And seketh nought how holpen for to be,
It nis but folye and encrees of peyne;
And sin that here assembled be we tweyne
To finde bote of wo that we ben inne,
It were al tyme sone to biginne.
I am a womman, as ful wel ye woot,
And as I am avysed sodeynly,
So wol I telle yow, whyl it is hoot.
Me thinketh thus, that neither ye nor I
Oughte half this wo to make skilfully.
For there is art y-now for to redresse
That yet is mis, and sleen this hevinesse.
Sooth is, the wo, the whiche that we ben inne,
For ought I woot, for no-thing elles is
But for the cause that we sholden twinne.
Considered al, ther nis no-more amis.
But what is thanne a remede un-to this,
But that we shape us sone for to mete?
This al and som, my dere herte swete.
Now that I shal wel bringen it aboute
To come ayein, sone after that I go,
Ther-of am I no maner thing in doute.
For dredeles, with-inne a wouke or two,
I shal ben here; and, that it may be so
By alle right, and in a wordes fewe,
I shal yow wel an heap of weyes shewe.
For which I wol not make long sermoun,
For tyme y-lost may not recovered be;
But I wol gon to my conclusioun,
And to the beste, in ought that I can see.
And, for the love of god, for-yeve it me
If I speke ought ayein your hertes reste;
For trewely, I speke it for the beste;
Makinge alwey a protestacioun,
That now these wordes, whiche that I shal seye,
Nis but to shewe yow my mocioun,
To finde un-to our helpe the beste weye;

And taketh it non other wyse, I preye.
 For in effect what-so ye me comaunde,
 That wol I doon, for that is no demaunde.
 Now herkeneth this, ye han wel understonde,
 My goinge graunted is by parlement
 So ferforth, that it may not be with-stonde
 For al this world, as by my Iugement.
 And sin ther helpeth noon avysement
 To letten it, lat it passe out of minde;
 And lat us shape a better wey to finde.
 The sothe is, that the twinninge of us tweyne
 Wol us disease and cruelliche anoye.
 But him bihoveth som-tyme han a peyne,
 That serveth love, if that he wol have Ioye.
 And sin I shal no ferthere out of Troye
 Than I may ryde ayein on half a morwe,
 It oughte lasse causen us to sorwe.
 So as I shal not so ben hid in muwe,
 That day by day, myn owene herte dere,
 Sin wel ye woot that it is now a truwe,
 Ye shul ful wel al myn estat y-here.
 And er that truwe is doon, I shal ben here,
 And thanne have ye bothe Antenor y-wonne
 And me also; beth glad now, if ye conne;
 And thenk right thus, "Criseyde is now agoon,
 But what! she shal come hastely ayeyn;"
 And whanne, allas? by god, lo, right anoon,
 Er dayes ten, this dar I saufly seyn.
 And thanne at erste shul we been so fayn,
 So as we shulle to-gederes ever dwelle,
 Thal al this world ne mighte our blisse telle.
 I see that ofte, ther-as we ben now,
 That for the beste, our conseil for to hyde,
 Ye speke not with me, nor I with yow
 In fourtenight; ne see yow go ne ryde.
 May ye not ten dayes thanne abyde,
 For myn honour, in swich an aventure?
 Y-wis, ye mowen elles lite endure!
 Ye knowe eek how that al my kin is here,
 But-if that onliche it my fader be;
 And eek myn othere thinges alle y-fere,
 And nameliche, my dere herte, ye,
 Whom that I nolde leven for to see
 For al this world, as wyd as it hath space;
 Or elles, see ich never Ioves face!
 Why trowe ye my fader in this wyse
 Coveiteth so to see me, but for drede
 Lest in this toun that folkes me dispysse
 By-cause of him, for his unhappy dede?
 What woot my fader what lyf that I lede?
 For if he wiste in Troye how wel I fare,
 Us neded for my wending nought to care.
 Ye seen that every day eek, more and more,
 Men trete of pees; and it supposed is,
 That men the quene Eleyne shal restore,

And Grekes us restore that is mis.
So though ther nere comfort noon but this,
That men purposen pees on every syde,
Ye may the bettre at ese of herte abyde.
For if that it be pees, myn herte dere,
The nature of the pees mot nedes dryve
That men moste entrecomunen y-fere,
And to and fro eek ryde and gon as blyve
Alday as thikke as been flen from an hyve;
And every wight han libertee to bleve
Wher-as him list the bet, with-outen leve.
And though so be that pees ther may be noon,
Yet hider, though ther never pees ne were,
I moste come; for whider sholde I goon,
Or how mischaunce sholde I dwelle there
Among tho men of armes ever in fere?
For which, as wisly god my soule rede,
I can not seen wher-of ye sholden drede.
Have here another wey, if it so be
That al this thing ne may yow not suffyse.
My fader, as ye knowen wel, pardee,
Is old, and elde is ful of coveityse.
And I right now have founden al the gyse,
With-oute net, wher-with I shal him hente;
And herkeneth how, if that ye wole assente.
Lo, Troilus, men seyn that hard it is
The wolf ful, and the wether hool to have;
This is to seyn, that men ful ofte, y-wis,
Mot spenden part, the remenaunt for to save.
For ay with gold men may the herte grave
Of him that set is up-on coveityse;
And how I mene, I shal it yow devyse.
The moeble which that I have in this toun
Un-to my fader shal I take, and seye,
That right for trust and for savacioun
It sent is from a freend of his or tweye,
The whiche freendes ferventliche him preye
To senden after more, and that in hye,
Whyl that this toun stant thus in Iupartye.
And that shal been an huge quantitee,
Thus shal I seyn, but, lest it folk aspyde,
This may be sent by no wight but by me;
I shal eek shewen him, if pees bityde,
What frendes that ich have on every syde
Toward the court, to doon the wrathe pace
Of Priamus, and doon him stonde in grace.
So, what for o thing and for other, swete,
I shal him so enchaunten with my sawes,
That right in hevene his sowle is, shal he mete!
For al Appollo, or his clerkes lawes,
Or calculinge awayleth nought three hawes;
Desyr of gold shal so his sowle blende,
That, as me lyst, I shal wel make an ende.
And if he wolde ought by his sort it preve
If that I lye, in certayn I shal fonde

Distorben him, and plukke him by the sleve,
 Makinge his sort, and beren him on honde,
 He hath not wel the goddes understonde.
 For goddes speken in amphibologyes,
 And, for a sooth, they tellen twenty lyes.
 Eek drede fond first goddes, I suppose,
 Thus shal I seyn, and that his cowarde herte
 Made him amis the goddes text to glose,
 Whan he for ferde out of his Delphos sterte.
 And but I make him sone to converte,
 And doon my reed with-inne a day or tweye,
 I wol to yow oblige me to deye.
 And treweliche, as writen wel I finde,
 That al this thing was seyde of good entente;
 And that hir herte trewe was and kinde
 Towardes him, and spak right as she mente,
 And that she starf for wo neigh, whan she wente,
 And was in purpos ever to be trewe;
 Thus writen they that of hir werkes knewe.
 This Troilus, with herte and eres spradde,
 Herde al this thing devysen to and fro;
 And verraylich him semed that he hadde
 The selve wit; but yet to lete hir go
 His herte misforyaf him ever-mo.
 But fynally, he gan his herte wreste
 To trusten hir, and took it for the beste.
 For which the grete furie of his penaunce
 Was queynt with hope, and ther-with hem bitwene
 Bigan for Ioye the amoureuse daunce.
 And as the briddes, whan the sonne is shene,
 Delyten in hir song in leves grene,
 Right so the wordes that they spake y-fere
 Delyted hem, and made hir hertes clere.
 But natheles, the wending of Criseyde,
 For al this world, may nought out of his minde;
 For which ful ofte he pitously hir preyde,
 That of hir heste he might hir trewe finde.
 And seyde hir, 'certes, if ye be unkinde,
 And but ye come at day set in-to Troye,
 Ne shal I never have hele, honour, ne Ioye.
 For al-so sooth as sonne up-rist on morwe,
 And, god! so wisly thou me, woful wrecche,
 To reste bringe out of this cruel sorwe,
 I wol my-selven slee if that ye drecche.
 But of my deeth though litel be to recche,
 Yet, er that ye me cause so to smerte,
 Dwel rather here, myn owene swete herte!
 For trewely, myn owene lady dere,
 Tho sleighes yet that I have herd yow sterte
 Ful shaply been to failen alle y-fere.
 For thus men seyn, "that oon thenketh the bere,
 But al another thenketh his ledere."
 Your sire is wys, and seyde is, out of drede,
 "Men may the wyse at-renne, and not at-rede."
 It is ful hard to halten unespyed

Bifore a crepul, for he can the craft;
Your fader is in sleighte as Argus yêd;
For al be that his moeble is him biraft,
His olde sleighte is yet so with him laft,
Ye shal not blende him for your womanhede,
Ne feyne a-right, and that is al my drede.
I noot if pees shal ever-mo bityde;
But, pees or no, for earnest ne for game,
I woot, sin Calkas on the Grekes syde
Hath ones been, and lost so foule his name,
He dar no more come here ayein for shame;
For which that weye, for ought I can espye,
To trusten on, nis but a fantasye.
Ye shal eek seen, your fader shal yow glose
To been a wyf, and as he can wel preche,
He shal som Grek so preyse and wel alose,
That ravisschen he shal yow with his speche,
Or do yow doon by force as he shal teche.
And Troilus, of whom ye nil han routhe,
Shal causeles so sterven in his trouthe!
And over al this, your fader shal despyse
Us alle, and seyn this citee nis but lorn;
And that thassege never shal aryse,
For-why the Grekes han it alle sworn
Til we be slayn, and doun our walles torn.
And thus he shal you with his wordes fere,
That ay drede I, that ye wol bleve there.
Ye shul eek seen so many a lusty knight
A-mong the Grekes, ful of worthinesse,
And eche of hem with herte, wit, and might
To plesen yow don al his besinesse,
That ye shul dullen of the rudenesse
Of us sely Troianes, but-if routhe
Remorde yow, or vertue of your trouthe.
And this to me so grevous is to thinke,
That fro my brest it wol my soule rende;
Ne dredeles, in me ther may not sinke
A good opinioun, if that ye wende;
For-why your faderes sleighte wol us shende.
And if ye goon, as I have told yow yore,
So thenk I nam but deed, with-oute more.
For which, with humble, trewe, and pitous herte,
A thousand tymes mercy I yow preye;
So reweth on myn aspre peynes smerte,
And doth somewhat, as that I shal yow seye,
And lat us stele away bitwixe us tweye;
And thenk that folye is, whan man may chese,
For accident his substaunce ay to lese.
I mene this, that sin we mowe er day
Wel stele away, and been to-gider so,
What wit were it to putten in assay,
In cas ye sholden to your fader go,
If that ye mighte come ayein or no?
Thus mene I, that it were a gret folye
To putte that sikernes in Iupartye.

And vulgarly to speken of substaunce
 Of tresour, may we bothe with us lede
 Y-nough to live in honour and plesaunce,
 Til in-to tyme that we shul ben dede;
 And thus we may eschewen al this drede.
 For everich other wey ye can recorde,
 Myn herte, y-wis, may not ther-with acorde.
 And hardily, ne dredeth no poverté,
 For I have kin and freendes elles-where
 That, though we comen in our bare sherte,
 Us sholde neither lakke gold ne gere,
 But been honoured whyl we dwelten there.
 And go we anoon, for, as in myn entente,
 This is the beste, if that ye wole assente.
 Criseyde, with a syk, right in this wyse
 Answerde, 'y-wis, my dere herte trewe,
 We may wel stele away, as ye devyse,
 And finde swiche unthrifty weyes newe;
 But afterward, ful sore it wol us rewe.
 And help me god so at my moste nede
 As causeles ye suffren al this drede!
 For thilke day that I for cherisshinge
 Or drede of fader, or of other wight,
 Or for estat, delyt, or for weddinge
 Be fals to yow, my Troilus, my knight,
 Saturnes doughter, Iuno, thorough hir might,
 As wood as Athamante do me dwelle
 Eternaly in Stix, the put of helle!
 And this on every god celestial
 I swere it yow, and eek on eche goddessé,
 On every Nyphe and deite infernal,
 On Satiry and Fauny more and lesse,
 That halve goddes been of wildernessé;
 And Attropos my threed of lyf to-breste
 If I be fals; now trowe me if thou leste!
 And thou, Simoys, that as an arwe clere
 Thorough Troye rennest ay downward to the see,
 Ber witnesse of this word that seyde is here,
 That thilke day that ich untrewé be
 To Troilus, myn owene herte free,
 That thou retorne bakwarde to thy welle,
 And I with body and soule sinke in helle!
 But that ye speke, away thus for to go
 And leten alle your freendes, god for-bede,
 For any womman, that ye sholden so,
 And namely, sin Troye hath now swich nede
 Of help; and eek of o thing taketh hede,
 If this were wist, my lif laye in balaunce,
 And your honour; god shilde us fro mischaunce!
 And if so be that pees her-after take,
 As alday happeth, after anger, game,
 Why, lord! the sorwe and wo ye wolden make,
 That ye ne dorste come ayein for shame!
 And er that ye Iupartén so your name,
 Beth nought to hasty in this hote fare;

For hasty man ne wanteth never care.
What trowe ye the peple eek al aboute
Wolde of it seye? It is ful light to arede.
They wolden seye, and swere it, out of doute,
That love ne droof yow nought to doon this dede,
But lust voluptuous and coward drede.
Thus were al lost, y-wis, myn herte dere,
Your honour, which that now shyneth so clere.
And also thenketh on myn honestee,
That floureth yet, how foule I sholde it shende,
And with what filthe it spotted sholde be,
If in this forme I sholde with yow wende.
Ne though I livede un-to the worldes ende,
My name sholde I never ayeinward winne;
Thus were I lost, and that were routhe and sinne.
And for-thy slee with reson al this hete;
Men seyn, "the suffraunt overcometh," pardee;
Eek "who-so wol han leef, he leef mot lete;"
Thus maketh vertue of necessitee
By pacience, and think that lord is he
Of fortune ay, that nought wol of hir recche;
And she ne daunteth no wight but a wrecche.
And trusteth this, that certes, herte swete,
Er Phebus suster, Lucina the shene,
The Leoun passe out of this Ariete,
I wol ben here, with-outen any wene.
I mene, as helpe me Iuno, hevenes quene,
The tenthe day, but-if that deeth me assayle,
I wol yow seen, with-outen any fayle.'
'And now, so this be sooth,' quod Troilus,
'I shal wel suffre un-to the tenthe day,
Sin that I see that nede it moot be thus.
But, for the love of god, if it be may,
So lat us stele prively away;
For ever in oon, as for to live in reste,
Myn herte seyth that it wol been the beste.'
'O mercy, god, what lyf is this?' quod she;
'Allas, ye slee me thus for verray tene!
I see wel now that ye mistrusten me;
For by your wordes it is wel y-sene.
Now, for the love of Cynthia the shene,
Mistrust me not thus causeles, for routhe;
Sin to be trewe I have yow plight my trouthe.
And thenketh wel, that som tyme it is wit
To spende a tyme, a tyme for to winne;
Ne, pardee, lorn am I nought fro yow yit,
Though that we been a day or two a-twinne.
Dryf out the fantasyes yow with-inne;
And trusteth me, and leveth eek your sorwe,
Or here my trouthe, I wol not live til morwe.
For if ye wiste how sore it doth me smerte,
Ye wolde cesse of this; for god, thou wost,
The pure spirit wepeth in myn herte,
To see yow wepen that I love most,
And that I moot gon to the Grekes ost.

Ye, nere it that I wiste remedye
 To come ayein, right here I wolde dye!
 But certes, I am not so nyce a wight
 That I ne can imaginen a way
 To come ayein that day that I have hight.
 For who may holde thing that wol a-way?
 My fader nought, for al his queynte pley.
 And by my thrift, my wending out of Troye
 Another day shal torne us alle to Ioye.
 For-thy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
 If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
 And for the love which that I love yow eke,
 That er that I departe fro yow here,
 That of so good a comfort and a chere
 I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
 Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.
 And over al this, I pray yow,' quod she tho,
 'Myn owene hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
 Sin I am thyn al hool, with-oute mo,
 That whyl that I am absent, no plesaunce
 Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.
 For I am ever a-gast, for-why men rede,
 That "love is thing ay ful of bisy drede."
 For in this world ther liveth lady noon,
 If that ye were untrewes, as god defende!
 That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
 As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
 And douteles, if that ich other wende,
 I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
 For goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.'
 To this answerde Troilus and seyde,
 'Now god, to whom ther nis no cause y-wrye,
 Me glade, as wis I never un-to Criseyde,
 Sin thilke day I saw hir first with yē,
 Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.
 At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
 I can no more, it shal be founde at preve.'
 'Graunt mercy, goode myn, y-wis,' quod she,
 'And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
 Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
 To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
 And whyl that god my wit wol me conserve,
 I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde,
 That ay honour to me-ward shal rebounde.
 For trusteth wel, that your estat royal
 Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
 Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
 Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek richesse,
 Ne made me to rewe on your distresse;
 But moral vertue, grounded upon trouthe,
 That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhel!
 Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
 And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt
 Every thing that souned in-to badde,
 As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;

And that your reson bryddled your delyt,
 This made, aboven every creature,
 That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure.
 And this may lengthe of yeres not for-do,
 Ne remuable fortune deface;
 But Iuppiter, that of his might may do
 The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
 Er nightes ten, to meten in this place,
 So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;
 And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.
 And after that they longe y-pleyned hadde,
 And ofte y-kist and streite in armes folde,
 The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde,
 And rewfulliche his lady gan biholde,
 As he that felte dethes cares colde.
 And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
 Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.
 For mannes heed imaginen ne can,
 Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
 The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
 That passen every torment down in helle.
 For whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,
 Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
 With-outen more, out of the chaumbre he wente.
 Explicit Liber Quartus.

BOOK V.

Incipit Liber Quintus.

Aprochen gan the fatal destinee
 That Ioves hath in disposicioun,
 And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren three,
 Committeth, to don execucioun;
 For which Criseyde moste out of the toun,
 And Troilus shal dwelle forth in pyne
 Til Lachesis his threed no lenger twyne.—
 The golden-tressed. Phebus heighe on-lofte
 Thryës hadde alle with his bemes shene
 The snowes molte, and Zephirus as ofte
 Y-brought ayein the tendre leves grene,
 Sin that the sone of Ecuba the quene
 Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe
 Was al, that she departe sholde a-morwe.
 Ful redy was at pryme Dyomede,
 Criseyde un-to the Grekes ost to lede,
 For sorwe of which she felte hir herte blede,
 As she that niste what was best to rede.
 And trewely, as men in bokes rede,
 Men wiste never womman han the care,
 Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.
 This Troilus, with-outen reed or lore,
 As man that hath his Ioyes eek forlore,
 Was waytinge on his lady ever-more
 As she that was the soothfast crop and more
 Of al his lust, or Ioyes here-tofore.

But Troilus, now farewel al thy Ioye,
 For shaltow never seen hir eft in Troye!
 Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere,
 He gan his wo ful manly for to hyde,
 That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere;
 But at the yate ther she sholde oute ryde
 With certeyn folk, he hoved hir tabyde,
 So wo bigoon, al wolde he nought him pleyne,
 That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.
 For ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,
 Whan Diomedes on horse gan him dresse,
 And seyde un-to him-self this ilke sawe,
 'Allas,' quod he, 'thus foul a wrecchednesse
 Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse?
 Were it not bet at ones for to dye
 Than ever-more in langour thus to drye?
 Why nil I make at ones riche and pore
 To have y-nough to done, er that she go?
 Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore?
 Why nil I sleen this Diomedes also?
 Why nil I rather with a man or two
 Stele hir a-way? Why wol I this endure?
 Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?'
 But why he nolde doon so fel a dede,
 That shal I seyn, and why him liste it spare:
 He hadde in herte alwey a maner drede,
 Lest that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
 Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.
 And elles, certeyn, as I seyde yore,
 He hadde it doon, with-outen wordes more.
 Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde,
 Ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde 'allas!'
 But forth she moot, for ought that may bityde,
 And forth she rit ful sorwfully a pas.
 Ther nis non other remedie in this cas.
 What wonder is though that hir sore smerte,
 Whan she forgoth hir owene swete herte?
 This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye,
 With hauke on hond, and with an huge route
 Of knightes, rood and dide hir companye,
 Passinge al the valey fer with-oute.
 And ferther wolde han riden, out of doute,
 Ful fayn, and wo was him to goon so sone;
 But torne he moste, and it was eek to done.
 And right with that was Antenor y-come
 Out of the Grekes ost, and every wight
 Was of it glad, and seyde he was wel-come.
 And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
 He peyned him with al his fulle might
 Him to with-holde of wepinge at the leste,
 And Antenor he kiste, and made feste.
 And ther-with-al he moste his leve take,
 And caste his eye upon hir pitously,
 And neer he rood, his cause for to make,
 To take hir by the honde al sobrelly.

And lord! so she gan wepen tendrely!
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye,
'Now hold your day, and dooth me not to deye.'
With that his courser torned he a-boute
With face pale, and un-to Diomede
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route;
Of which the sone of Tydeus took hede,
As he that coude more than the crede
In swich a craft, and by the reyne hir hente;
And Troilus to Troye homwarde he wente.
This Diomede, that ladde hir by the brydel,
Whan that he saw the folk of Troye aweye,
Thoughte, 'al my labour shal not been on ydel,
If that I may, for somewhat shal I seye.
For at the worste it may yet shorte our weye.
I have herd seyde, eek tymes twyës twelve,
"He is a fool that wol for-yete him-selve."
But natheles this thoughte he wel ynough,
'That certaynly I am aboute nought
If that I speke of love, or make it tough;
For douteles, if she have in hir thought
Him that I gesse, he may not been y-brought
So sone away; but I shal finde a mene,
That she not wite as yet shal what I mene.'
This Diomede, as he that coude his good,
Whan this was doon, gan fallen forth in speche
Of this and that, and asked why she stood
In swich disese, and gan hir eek biseche,
That if that he encrese mighte or eche
With any thing hir ese, that she sholde
Comaunde it him, and seyde he doon it wolde.
For trewely he swoor hir, as a knight,
That ther nas thing with whiche he mighte hir plese,
That he nolde doon his peyne and al his might
To doon it, for to doon hir herte an ese.
And preyede hir, she wolde hir sorwe apese,
And seyde, 'y-wis, we Grekes con have Ioye
To honouren yow, as wel as folk of Troye.'
He seyde eek thus, 'I woot, yow thinketh straunge,
No wonder is, for it is to yow newe,
Thaqueintaunce of these Troianes to chaunge,
For folk of Grece, that ye never knewe.
But wolde never god but-if as trewe
A Greek ye shulde among us alle finde
As any Troian is, and eek as kinde.
And by the cause I swoor yow right, lo, now,
To been your freend, and helply, to my might,
And for that more acqueintaunce eek of yow
Have ich had than another straunger wight,
So fro this forth I pray yow, day and night,
Comaundeth me, how sore that me smerte,
To doon al that may lyke un-to your herte;
And that ye me wolde as your brother trete,
And taketh not my frendship in despyt;
And though your sorwes be for thinges grete,

Noot I not why, but out of more respyt,
 Myn herte hath for to amende it greet delyt.
 And if I may your harmes not redresse,
 I am right sorry for your hevinesse.
 And though ye Troians with us Grekes wrothe
 Han many a day be, alwey yet, pardee,
 O god of love in sooth we serven bothe.
 And, for the love of god, my lady free,
 Whom so ye hate, as beth not wroth with me.
 For trewely, ther can no wight yow serve,
 That half so looth your wraththe wolde deserve.
 And nere it that we been so neigh the tente
 Of Calkas, which that seen us bothe may,
 I wolde of this yow telle al myn entente;
 But this enseled til another day.
 Yeve me your hond, I am, and shal ben ay,
 God help me so, whyl that my lyf may dure,
 Your owene aboven every creature.
 Thus seyde I never er now to womman born;
 For god myn herte as wisly glade so,
 I lovede never womman here-biforn
 As paramours ne never shal no mo.
 And, for the love of god, beth not my fo;
 Al can I not to yow, my lady dere,
 Compleyne aright, for I am yet to lere.
 And wondreth not, myn owene lady bright,
 Though that I speke of love to you thus blyve;
 For I have herd or this of many a wight,
 Hath loved thing he never saugh his lyve.
 Eek I am not of power for to stryve
 Ayens the god of love, but him obeye
 I wol alwey, and mercy I yow preye.
 Ther been so worthy knightes in this place,
 And ye so fair, that everich of hem alle
 Wol peynen him to stonden in your grace.
 But mighte me so fair a grace falle,
 That ye me for your servaunt wolde calle,
 So lowly ne so trewely you serve
 Nil noon of hem, as I shal, til I sterve.
 Criseide un-to that purpos lyte answerde,
 As she that was with sorwe oppressed so
 That, in effect, she nought his tales herde,
 But here and there, now here a word or two.
 Hir thoughte hir sorwful herte brast a-two.
 For whan she gan hir fader fer aspye,
 Wel neigh down of hir hors she gan to sye.
 But natheles she thonked Diomedes
 Of al his travaile, and his goode chere,
 And that him liste his friendship hir to bede;
 And she accepteth it in good manere,
 And wolde do fayn that is him leef and dere;
 And trusten him she wolde, and wel she mighte,
 As seyde she, and from hir hors she alighte.
 Hir fader hath hir in his armes nome,
 And tweyntye tyme he kiste his doughter swete,

And seyde, 'O dere doughter myn, wel-come!'
 She seyde eek, she was fayn with him to mete,
 And stood forth mewet, mildē, and mansuete.
 But here I leve hir with hir fader dwelle,
 And forth I wol of Troilus yow telle.
 To Troye is come this woful Troilus,
 In sorwe aboven alle sorwes smerte,
 With felon look, and face dispitous.
 Tho sodeinly doun from his hors he sterte,
 And thorough his paleys, with a swollen herte,
 To chambre he wente; of no-thing took he hede,
 Ne noon to him dar speke a word for drede.
 And there his sorwes that he spared hadde
 He yaf an issue large, and 'deeth!' he cryde;
 And in his throwes frenetyk and madde
 He cursed Iove, Appollo, and eek Cupyde,
 He cursed Ceres, Bacus, and Cipryde,
 His burthe, him-self, his fate, and eek nature,
 And, save his lady, every creature.
 To bedde he goth, and weyleth there and torneth
 In furie, as dooth he, Ixion, in helle;
 And in this wyse he neigh til day soiofneth.
 But tho bigan his herte a lyte unswelle
 Thorough teres which that gonnen up to welle;
 And pitously he cryde up-on Criseyde,
 And to him-self right thus he spak, and seyde:—
 'Wher is myn owene lady lief and dere,
 Wher is hir whyte brest, wher is it, where?
 Wher ben hir armes and hir eyen clere,
 That yesternight this tyme with me were?
 Now may I wepe allone many a tere,
 And graspe aboute I may, but in this place,
 Save a pilowe, I finde nought tenbrace.
 How shal I do? Whan shal she com ayeyn?
 I noot, alas! why leet ich hir to go?
 As wolde god, ich hadde as tho be sleyn!
 O herte myn, Criseyde, O swete fo!
 O lady myn, that I love and no mo!
 To whom for ever-mo myn herte I dowe;
 See how I deye, ye nil me not rescowe!
 Who seeth yow now, my righte lode-sterre?
 Who sit right now or stant in your presence?
 Who can conforten now your hertes werre?
 Now I am gon, whom yeve ye audience?
 Who speketh for me right now in myn absence?
 Allas, no wight; and that is al my care;
 For wel wot I, as yvel as I ye fare.
 How shulde I thus ten dayes ful endure,
 Whan I the firste night have al this tene?
 How shal she doon eek, sorwful creature?
 For tendernesse, how shal she this sustene,
 Swich wo for me? O pitous, pale, and grene
 Shal been your fresshe wommanliche face
 For langour, er ye torne un-to this place.'
 And whan he fil in any slomerings,

Anoon biginne he sholde for to grone,
 And dremen of the dredfulleste thinges
 That mighte been; as, mete he were allone
 In place horrible, makinge ay his mone,
 Or meten that he was amanges alle
 His enemys, and in hir hondes falle.
 And ther-with-al his body sholde sterte,
 And with the stert al sodeinliche awake,
 And swich a tremour fele aboute his herte,
 That of the feer his body sholde quake;
 And there-with-al he sholde a noyse make,
 And seme as though he sholde falle depe
 From heighe a-lofte; and than he wolde wepe,
 And rewen on him-self so pitously,
 That wonder was to here his fantasye.
 Another tyme he sholde mightily
 Conforte him-self, and seyn it was folye,
 So causeles swich drede for to drye,
 And eft biginne his aspre sorwes newe,
 That every man mighte on his sorwes rewe.
 Who coude telle aright or ful discryve
 His wo, his pleynte, his langour, and his pyne?
 Nought al the men that han or been on-lyve.
 Thou, redere, mayst thy-self ful wel devyne
 That swich a wo my wit can not defyne.
 On ydel for to wryte it sholde I swinke,
 Whan that my wit is very it to thinke.
 On hevene yet the sterres were sene,
 Al-though ful pale y-waxen was the mone;
 And whyten gan the orisonte shene
 Al estward, as it woned is to done.
 And Phebus with his rosy carte sone
 Gan after that to dresse him up to fare,
 Whan Troilus hath sent after Pandare.
 This Pandare, that of al the day biforn
 Ne mighte have comen Troilus to see,
 Al-though he on his heed it hadde y-sworn,
 For with the king Pryam alday was he,
 So that it lay not in his libertee
 No-wher to gon, but on the morwe he wente
 To Troilus, whan that he for him sente.
 For in his herte he coude wel devyne,
 That Troilus al night for sorwe wook;
 And that he wolde telle him of his pyne,
 This knew he wel y-nough, with-oute book.
 For which to chaumbre streight the wey he took,
 And Troilus tho sobreliche he grette,
 And on the bed ful sone he gan him sette.
 'My Pandarus,' quod Troilus, 'the sorwe
 Which that I drye, I may not longe endure.
 I trowe I shal not liven til to-morwe;
 For whiche I wolde alwey, on aventure,
 To thee devysen of my sepulture
 The forme, and of my moeble thou dispone
 Right as thee semeth best is for to done.

But of the fyr and flaumbe funeral
In whiche my body brenne shal to glede,
And of the feste and pleyes palestral
At my vigile, I pray thee take good hede
That al be wel; and offre Mars my stede,
My swerd, myn helm, and, leve brother dere,
My sheld to Pallas yef, that shyneth clere.
The poudre in which myn herte y-brend shal torne,
That preye I thee thou take and it conserve
In a vessel, that men clepeth an urne,
Of gold, and to my lady that I serve,
For love of whom thus pitously I sterve,
So yeve it hir, and do me this plesaunce,
To preye hir kepe it for a remembraunce.
For wel I fele, by my maladye,
And by my dremes now and yore ago,
Al certainly, that I mot nedes dye.
The owle eek, which that hight Ascaphilo,
Hath after me shrighthe alle thise nightes two.
And, god Mercurie! of me now, woful wrecche,
The soule gyde, and, whan thee list, it fecche!’
Pandare answerde, and seyde, ‘Troilus,
My dere freend, as I have told thee yore,
That it is folye for to sorwen thus,
And causeles, for whiche I can no-more.
But who-so wol not trowen reed ne lore,
I can not seen in him no remedye,
But lete him worthen with his fantasye.
But Troilus, I pray thee tel me now,
If that thou trowe, er this, that any wight
Hath loved paramours as wel as thou?
Ye, god wot, and fro many a worthy knight
Hath his lady goon a fourtenight,
And he not yet made halvendel the fare.
What nede is thee to maken al this care?
Sin day by day thou mayst thy-selven see
That from his love, or elles from his wyf,
A man mot twinnen of necessitee,
Ye, though he love hir as his owene lyf;
Yet nil he with him-self thus maken stryf.
For wel thou wost, my leve brother dere,
That alwey freendes may nought been y-fere.
How doon this folk that seen hir loves wedded
By freendes might, as it bi-tit ful ofte,
And seen hem in hir spouses bed y-bedded?
God woot, they take it wysly, faire and softe.
For-why good hope halt up hir herte on-lofte,
And for they can a tyme of sorwe endure;
As tyme hem hurt, a tyme doth hem cure.
So sholdestow endure, and late slyde
The tyme, and fonde to ben glad and light.
Ten dayes nis so longe not tabyde.
And sin she thee to comen hath bihight,
She nil hir hestes breken for no wight.
For dred thee not that she nil finden weye

To come ayein, my lyf that dorste I leye.
 Thy swevenes eek and al swich fantasye
 Dryf out, and lat hem faren to mischaunce;
 For they procede of thy malencolye,
 That doth thee fele in sleep al this penaunce.
 A straw for alle swevenes signifiauce!
 God helpe me so, I counte hem not a bene,
 Ther woot no man aright what dremes mene.
 For prestes of the temple tellen this,
 That dremes been the revelaciouns
 Of goddes, and as wel they telle, y-wis,
 That they ben infernals illusiouns;
 And leches seyn, that of complexiouns
 Proceden they, or fast, or glotonye.
 Who woot in sooth thus what they signifye?
 Eek othere seyn that thorough impressiouns,
 As if a wight hath faste a thing in minde,
 That ther-of cometh swiche avisiouns;
 And othere seyn, as they in bokes finde,
 That, after tymes of the yeer by kinde,
 Men dreme, and that theeffect goth by the mone;
 But leve no dreem, for it is nought to done.
 Wel worth of dremes ay thise olde wyves,
 And treweliche eek augurie of thise foules;
 For fere of which men wenen lese her lyves,
 As ravenes qualm, or shryking of thise oules.
 To trowen on it bothe fals and foul is.
 Allas, allas, so noble a creature
 As is a man, shal drede swich ordure!
 For which with al myn herte I thee beseche,
 Un-to thy-self that al this thou foryive;
 And rys up now with-out more speche,
 And lat us caste how forth may best be drive
 This tyme, and eek how freshly we may live
 Whan that she cometh, the which shal be right sone;
 God help me so, the beste is thus to done.
 Rys, lat us speke of lusty lyf in Troye
 That we han lad, and forth the tyme dryve;
 And eek of tyme cominge us reioye,
 That bringen shal our blisse now so blyve;
 And langour of these twyës dayes fyve
 We shal ther-with so foryete or oppresse,
 That wel unnethe it doon shal us duresse.
 This toun is ful of lordes al aboute,
 And trewes lasten al this mene whyle.
 Go we pleye us in som lusty route
 To Sarpedon, not hennes but a myle.
 And thus thou shalt the tyme wel bigyle,
 And dryve it forth un-to that blisful morwe,
 That thou hir see, that cause is of thy sorwe.
 Now rys, my dere brother Troilus;
 For certes, it noon honour is to thee
 To wepe, and in thy bed to iouken thus.
 For trewely, of o thing trust to me,
 If thou thus ligge a day, or two, or three,

The folk wol wene that thou, for cowardyse,
Thee feynest syk, and that thou darst not ryse.'
This Troilus answerde, 'O brother dere,
This knowen folk that han y-suffred peyne,
That though he wepe and make sorwful chere,
That feleth harm and smert in every veyne,
No wonder is; and though I ever pleyne,
Or alwey wepe, I am no-thing to blame,
Sin I have lost the cause of al my game.
But sin of fyne force I moot aryse,
I shal aryse, as sone as ever I may;
And god, to whom myn herte I sacrifyse,
So sende us hastely the tenthe day!
For was ther never fowl so fayn of May,
As I shal been, whan that she cometh in Troye,
That cause is of my torment and my Ioye.
But whider is thy reed,' quod Troilus,
'That we may pleye us best in al this toun?'
'By god, my conseil is,' quod Pandarus,
'To ryde and pleye us with king Sarpedoun.'
So longe of this they speken up and doun,
Til Troilus gan at the laste assente
To ryse, and forth to Sarpedoun they wente.
This Sarpedoun, as he that honourable
Was ever his lyve, and ful of heigh prowessse,
With al that mighte y-served been on table,
That deyntee was, al coste it greet richesse,
He fedde hem day by day, that swich noblesse,
As seyden bothe the moste and eek the leste,
Was never er that day wist at any feste.
Nor in this world ther is non instrument
Delicious, through wind, or touche, or corde,
As fer as any wight hath ever y-went,
That tonge telle or herte may recorde,
That at that feste it nas wel herd acorde;
Ne of ladies eek so fayr a companye
On daunce, er tho, was never y-seyn with yë.
But what avayleth this to Troilus,
That for his sorwe no-thing of it roughte?
For ever in oon his herte piëtous
Ful bisily Criseyde his lady soughte.
On hir was ever al that his herte thoughte.
Now this, now that, so faste imagininge,
That glade, y-wis, can him no festeyinge.
These ladies eek that at this feste been,
Sin that he saw his lady was a-weye,
It was his sorwe upon hem for to seen,
Or for to here on instrumentz so pleye.
For she, that of his herte berth the keye,
Was absent, lo, this was his fantasye,
That no wight sholde make melodye.
Nor ther nas houre in al the day or night,
Whan he was ther-as no wight mighte him here,
That he ne seyde, 'O lufsom lady bright,
How have ye faren, sin that ye were here?

Wel-come, y-wis, myn owene lady dere.
 But welaway, al this nas but a mase;
 Fortune his howve entended bet to glase.
 The lettres eek, that she of olde tyme
 Hadde him y-sent, he wolde allone rede,
 An hundred sythe, a-twixen noon and pryme;
 Refiguringe hir shap, hir womanhede,
 With-inne his herte, and every word and dede
 That passed was, and thus he droof to an ende
 The ferthe day, and seyde, he wolde wende.
 And seyde, 'leve brother Pandarus,
 Intendestow that we shul herē bleve
 Til Sarpedoun wol forth congeyen us?
 Yet were it fairer that we toke our leve.
 For goddes love, lat us now sone at eve
 Our leve take, and homward lat us torne;
 For trewely, I nil not thus soiorne.'
 Pandare answerde, 'be we comen hider
 To fecchen fyr, and rennen hoom ayeyn?
 God helpe me so, I can not tellen whider
 We mighten goon, if I shal soothly seyn,
 Ther any wight is of us more fayn
 Than Sarpedoun; and if we hennes hye
 Thus sodeinly, I holde it vilanye,
 Sin that we seyden that we wolde bleve
 With him a wouke; and now, thus sodeinly,
 The ferthe day to take of him our leve,
 He wolde wondren on it, trewely!
 Lat us holde forth our purpos fermely;
 And sin that ye bihighten him to byde,
 Hold forward now, and after lat us ryde.'
 Thus Pandarus, with alle peyne and wo,
 Made him to dwelle; and at the woukes ende,
 Of Sarpedoun they toke hir leve tho,
 And on hir wey they spedden hem to wende.
 Quod Troilus, 'now god me grace sende,
 That I may finden, at myn hom-cominge,
 Criseyde comen!' and ther-with gan he singe.
 'Ye, hasel-wode!' thoughte this Pandare,
 And to him-self ful softly he seyde,
 'God woot, refreyden may this hote fare
 Er Calkas sende Troilus Criseyde!'
 But natheles, he laped thus, and seyde,
 And swor, y-wis, his herte him wel bihighte,
 She wolde come as sone as ever she mighte.
 Whan they un-to the paleys were y-comen
 Of Troilus, they doun of hors alighte,
 And to the chambre hir wey than han they nomen.
 And in-to tyme that it gan to nighte,
 They spaken of Criseyde the brighte.
 And after this, whan that hem bothe leste,
 They spedde hem fro the soper un-to reste.
 On morwe, as sone as day bigan to clere,
 This Troilus gan of his sleep tabreyde,
 And to Pandare, his owene brother dere,

'For love of god,' ful pitously he seyde,
'As go we seen the paleys of Criseyde;
For sin we yet may have namore feste,
So lat us seen hir paleys at the leste.'
And ther-with-al, his meyne for to blende,
A cause he fond in toune for to go,
And to Criseydes hous they gonnen wende.
But lord! this sely Troilus was wo!
Him thoughte his sorweful herte braste a-two.
For whan he saugh hir dores sperred alle,
Wel neigh for sorwe a-doun he gan to falle.
Therwith whan he was war and gan biholde
How shet was every windowe of the place,
As frost, him thoughte, his herte gan to colde;
For which with chaunged deedlich pale face,
With-outen word, he forth bigan to pace;
And, as god wolde, he gan so faste ryde,
That no wight of his contenaunce aspyde.
Than seyde he thus, 'O paleys desolat,
O hous, of houses whylom best y-hight,
O paleys empty and disconsolat,
O thou lanterne, of which queynt is the light,
O paleys, whylom day, that now art night,
Wel oughtestow to falle, and I to dye,
Sin she is went that wont was us to gye!
O paleys, whylom croune of houses alle,
Enlumined with sonne of alle blisse!
O ring, fro which the ruby is out-falle,
O cause of wo, that cause hast been of lisse!
Yet, sin I may no bet, fayn wolde I kisse
Thy colde dores, dorste I for this route;
And fare-wel shryne, of which the seynt is oute!'
Ther-with he caste on Pandarus his yë
With chaunged face, and pitous to biholde;
And whan he mighte his tyme aright aspye,
Ay as he rood, to Pandarus he tolde
His newe sorwe, and eek his Ioyes olde,
So pitously and with so dede an hewe,
That every wight mighte on his sorwe rewe.
Fro thennesforth he rydeth up and doun,
And every thing com him to remembraunce
As he rood forth by places of the toun
In whiche he whylom hadde al his plesaunce.
'Lo, yond saugh I myn owene lady daunce;
And in that temple, with hir eyen clere,
Me caughte first my righte lady dere.
And yonder have I herd ful lustily
My dere herte laughe, and yonder pleye
Saugh I hir ones eek ful blisfully.
And yonder ones to me gan she seye,
"Now goode swete, love me wel, I preye."
And yond so goodly gan she me biholde,
That to the deeth myn herte is to hir holde.
And at that corner, in the yonder hous,
Herde I myn alderlevest lady dere

So wommanly, with voys melodious,
 Singen so wel, so goodly, and so clere,
 That in my soule yet me thinketh I here
 The blisful soun; and, in that yonder place,
 My lady first me took un-to hir grace.'
 Thanne thoughte he thus, 'O blisful lord Cupyde,
 Whanne I the proces have in my memorie,
 How thou me hast werreyed on every syde,
 Men mighte a book make of it, lyk a storie.
 What nede is thee to seke on me victorie,
 Sin I am thyn, and hoolly at thy wille?
 What Ioye hastow thyn owene folk to spille?
 Wel hastow, lord, y-wroke on me thyn ire,
 Thou mighty god, and dredful for to greve!
 Now mercy, lord, thou wost wel I desire
 Thy grace most, of alle lustes leve.
 And live and deye I wol in thy bileve;
 For which I naxe in guerdon but a bone,
 That thou Criseyde ayein me sende sone.
 Distreyne hir herte as faste to retorne
 As thou dost myn to longen hir to see;
 Than woot I wel, that she nil not soiorne.
 Now, blisful lord, so cruel thou ne be
 Un-to the blood of Troye, I preye thee,
 As Iuno was un-to the blood Thebane,
 For which the folk of Thebes caughte hir bane.'
 And after this he to the yates wente
 Ther-as Criseyde out-rood a ful good paas,
 And up and down ther made he many a wente,
 And to him-self ful ofte he seyde 'allas!
 From hennes rood my blisse and my solas!
 As wolde blisful god now, for his Ioye,
 I mighte hir seen ayein come in-to Troye.
 And to the yonder hille I gan hir gyde,
 Allas! and there I took of hir my leve!
 And yond I saugh hir to hir fader ryde,
 For sorwe of which myn herte shal to-cleve.
 And hider hoom I com whan it was eve;
 And here I dwelle out-cast from alle Ioye,
 And shal, til I may seen hir eft in Troye.'
 And of him-self imagined he ofte
 To ben defet, and pale, and waxen lesse
 Than he was wont, and that men seyde softe,
 'What may it be? who can the sothe gesse
 Why Troilus hath al this hevinesse?'
 And al this nas but his malencolye,
 That he hadde of him-self swich fantasye.
 Another tyme imaginen he wolde
 That every wight that wente by the weye
 Had of him routhe, and that they seyen sholde,
 'I am right sory Troilus wol deye.'
 And thus he droof a day yet forth or tweye.
 As ye have herd, swich lyf right gan he lede,
 As he that stood bitwixen hope and drede.
 For which him lyked in his songes shewe

Thencheson of his wo, as he best mighte,
 And make a song of wordes but a few,
 Somwhat his woful herte for to lighte.
 And whan he was from every mannes sighte,
 With softe voys he, of his lady dere,
 That was absent, gan singe as ye may here.
 'O sterre, of which I lost have al the light,
 With herte soor wel oughte I to bewaile,
 That ever derk in torment, night by night,
 Toward my deeth with wind in stere I sayle;
 For which the tenthe night if that I fayle
 The gyding of thy bemes brighte an houre,
 My ship and me Caribdis wol devoure.'
 This song when he thus songen hadde, sone
 He fil ayein in-to his sykes olde;
 And every night, as was his wone to done,
 He stood the brighte mone to beholde,
 And al his sorwe he to the mone tolde;
 And seyde, 'y-wis, whan thou art horned newe,
 I shal be glad, if al the world be trewe!
 I saugh thyn hornes olde eek by the morwe,
 Whan hennes rood my righte lady dere,
 That cause is of my torment and my sorwe;
 For whiche, O brighte Lucina the clere,
 For love of god, ren faste aboute thy spere!
 For whan thyn hornes newe ginne springe,
 Than shal she come, that may my blisse bringe!'
 The day is more, and lenger every night,
 Than they be wont to be, him thoughte tho;
 And that the sonne wente his course unright
 By lenger wey than it was wont to go;
 And seyde, 'y-wis, me dredeth ever-mo,
 The sonnes sone, Pheton, be on-lyve,
 And that his fadres cart amis he dryve.'
 Upon the walles faste eek wolde he walke,
 And on the Grekes ost he wolde see,
 And to him-self right thus he wolde talke,
 'Lo, yonder is myn owene lady free,
 Or elles yonder, ther tho tentes be!
 And thennes comth this eyr, that is so sote,
 That in my soule I fele it doth me bote.
 And hardely this wind, that more and more
 Thus stoundemele encreseth in my face,
 Is of my ladyes depe sykes sore.
 I preve it thus, for in non othere place
 Of al this toun, save onliche in this space,
 Fele I no wind that souneth so lyk peyne;
 It seyth, "allas! why twinned be we tweyne?"
 This longe tyme he dryveth forth right thus,
 Til fully passed was the nynthe night;
 And ay bi-syde him was this Pandarus,
 That bisily dide alle his fulle might
 Him to comferte, and make his herte light;
 Yevinge him hope alwey, the tenthe morwe
 That she shal come, and stinten al his sorwe.

Up-on that other syde eek was Criseyde,
 With wommen fewe, among the Grekes stronge;
 For which ful ofte a day 'allas!' she seyde,
 'That I was born! Wel may myn herte longe
 After my deeth; for now live I to longe!
 Allas! and I ne may it not amende;
 For now is wors than ever yet I wende.
 My fader nil for no-thing do me grace
 To goon ayein, for nought I can him queme;
 And if so be that I my terme passe,
 My Troilus shal in his herte deme
 That I am fals, and so it may wel seme.
 Thus shal I have unthank on every syde;
 That I was born, so weylawey the tyde!
 And if that I me putte in Iupartye,
 To stele away by nighte, and it bifalle
 That I be caught, I shal be holde a spye;
 Or elles, lo, this drede I most of alle,
 If in the hondes of som wrecche I falle,
 I am but lost, al be myn herte trewe;
 Now mighty god, thou on my sorwe rewel!'
 Ful pale y-waxen was hir brighte face,
 Hir limes lene, as she that al the day
 Stood whan she dorste, and loked on the place
 Ther she was born, and ther she dwelt hadde ay.
 And al the night wepinge, allas! she lay.
 And thus despeired, out of alle cure,
 She ladde hir lyf, this woful creature.
 Ful ofte a day she sighte eek for destresse,
 And in hir-self she wente ay portrayinge
 Of Troilus the grete worthinesse,
 And alle his goodly wordes recordinge
 Sin first that day hir love bigan to springe.
 And thus she sette hir woful herte a-fyre
 Thorough remembraunce of that she gan desyre.
 In al this world ther nis so cruel herte
 That hir hadde herd compleynen in hir sorwe,
 That nolde han wopen for hir peynes smerte,
 So tendrely she weep, bothe eve and morwe.
 Hir nedede no teres for to borwe.
 And this was yet the worste of al hir peyne,
 Ther was no wight to whom she dorste hir pleyne.
 Ful rewfully she loked up-on Troye,
 Biheld the toures heighe and eek the halles;
 'Allas!' quod she, 'the plesaunce and the Ioye
 The whiche that now al torned in-to galle is,
 Have I had ofte with-inne yonder wallles!
 O Troilus, what dostow now,' she seyde;
 'Lord! whether yet thou thenke up-on Criseyde?
 Allas! I ne hadde trowed on your lore,
 And went with yow, as ye me radde er this!
 Thanne hadde I now not syked half so sore.
 Who mighte have seyde, that I had doon a-mis
 To stele away with swich on as he is?
 But al to late cometh the letuarie,

Whan men the cors un-to the grave carie.
To late is now to speke of this matere;
Prudence, alas! oon of thyn eyen three
Me lakked alwey, er that I cam here;
On tyme y-passed, wel remembred me;
And present tyme eek coude I wel y-see.
But futur tyme, er I was in the snare,
Coude I not seen; that causeth now my care.
But natheles, bityde what bityde,
I shal to-morwe at night, by est or weste,
Out of this ost stele on som maner syde,
And go with Troilus wher-as him leste.
This purpos wol I holde, and this is beste.
No fors of wikked tonges langlerye,
For ever on love han wrecches had envye.
For who-so wole of every word take hede,
Or rewlen him by every wightes wit,
Ne shal he never thryven, out of drede.
For that that som men blamen ever yit,
Lo, other maner folk commenden it.
And as for me, for al swich variaunce,
Felicitee clepe I my suffisaunce.
For which, with-outen any wordes mo,
To Troye I wol, as for conclusioun.
But god it wot, er fully monthes two,
She was ful fer fro that entencioun.
For bothe Troilus and Troye toun
Shal knotteles through-out hir herte slyde;
For she wol take a purpos for tabyde.
This Diomedes, of whom yow telle I gan,
Goth now, with-inne him-self ay arguinge
With al the sleighte and al that ever he can,
How he may best, with shortest taryinge,
In-to his net Criseydes herte bringe.
To this entente he coude never fyne;
To fisshen hir, he leyde out hook and lyne.
But natheles, wel in his herte he thoughte,
That she nas nat with-oute a love in Troye.
For never, sithen he hir thennes broughte,
Ne coude he seen her laughe or make loye.
He niste how best hir herte for tacoye.
'But for to assaye,' he seyde, 'it nought ne greveth;
For he that nought nassayeth, nought nacheveth.'
Yet seide he to him-self upon a night,
'Now am I not a fool, that woot wel how
Hir wo for love is of another wight,
And here-up-on to goon assaye hir now?
I may wel wite, it nil not been my prow.
For wyse folk in bokes it expresse,
"Men shal not wowe a wight in hevynesse."
But who-so mighte winnen swich a flour
From him, for whom she morneth night and day,
He mighte seyn, he were a conquerour.'
And right anon, as he that bold was ay,
Thoughte in his herte, 'happe, how happe may,

Al sholde I deye, I wole hir herte seche;
 I shal no more lesen but my speche.
 This Diomedes, as bokes us declare,
 Was in his nedes prest and corageous;
 With sterne voys and mighty limes square,
 Hardy, testif, strong, and chevalrous
 Of dedes, lyk his fader Tideus.
 And som men seyn, he was of tunge large;
 And heir he was of Calidoine and Arge.
 Criseyde mene was of hir stature,
 Ther-to of shap, of face, and eek of chere,
 Ther mighte been no fairer creature.
 And ofte tyme this was hir manere,
 To gon y-tressed with hir heres clere
 Doun by hir coler at hir bak bihinde,
 Which with a threde of gold she wolde binde.
 And, save hir browes ioyneden y-fere,
 Ther nas no lak, in ought I can espyen;
 But for to speken of hir eyen clere,
 Lo, trewely, they writen that hir syen,
 That Paradys stood formed in hir yën.
 And with hir riche beautee ever-more
 Strof love in hir, ay which of hem was more.
 She sobre was, eek simple, and wys with-al,
 The beste y-norissched eek that mighte be,
 And goodly of hir speche in general,
 Charitable, estatliche, lusty, and free;
 Ne never-mo ne lakkede hir pitee;
 Tendre-herted, slydinge of corage;
 But trewely, I can not telle hir age.
 And Troilus wel waxen was in highte,
 And complet formed by proporcoun
 So wel, that kinde it not amenden mighte;
 Yong, fresshe, strong, and hardy as lyoun;
 Trewe as steel in ech condicioun;
 On of the beste enteched creature,
 That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.
 And certainly in storie it is y-founde,
 That Troilus was never un-to no wight,
 As in his tyme, in no degree secounde
 In durring don that longeth to a knight.
 Al mighte a geaunt passen him of might,
 His herte ay with the firste and with the beste
 Stod paregal, to durre don that him leste.
 But for to tellen forth of Diomedes:—
 It fil that after, on the tenthe day,
 Sin that Criseyde out of the citee yede,
 This Diomedes, as fresshe as braunche in May,
 Com to the tente ther-as Calkas lay,
 And feyned him with Calkas han to done;
 But what he mente, I shal yow telle sone.
 Criseyde, at shorte wordes for to telle,
 Welcomed him, and doun by hir him sette;
 And he was ethe y-nough to maken dwelle.
 And after this, with-oute longe lette,

The spyces and the wyn men forth hem fette;
And forth they speke of this and that y-fere,
As freendes doon, of which som shal ye here.
He gan first fallen of the werre in speche
Bitwixe hem and the folk of Troye toun;
And of thassege he gan hir eek byseche,
To telle him what was hir opinioun.
Fro that demaunde he so descendeth doun
To asken hir, if that hir straunge thoughte
The Grekes gyse, and werkes that they wroughte?
And why hir fader tarieth so longe
To wedden hir un-to som worthy wight?
Criseyde, that was in hir peynes stronge
For love of Troilus, hir owene knight,
As fer-forth as she conning hadde or might,
Answerde him tho; but, as of his entente,
It semed not she wiste what he mente.
But natheles, this ilke Diomede
Gan in him-self assure, and thus he seyde,
'If ich aright have taken of yow hede,
Me thinketh thus, O lady myn, Criseyde,
That sin I first hond on your brydel leyde,
Whan ye out come of Troye by the morwe,
Ne coude I never seen yow but in sorwe.
Can I not seyn what may the cause be
But-if for love of som Troyan it were,
The which right sore wolde athinken me
That ye, for any wight that dwelleth there,
Sholden spille a quarter of a tere,
Or pitously your-selven so bigyle;
For dredelees, it is nought worth the whyle.
The folk of Troye, as who seyth, alle and some
In preson been, as ye your-selven see;
For thennes shal not oon on-lyve come
For al the gold bitwixen sonne and see.
Trusteth wel, and understondeth me,
Ther shal not oon to mercy goon on-lyve,
Al were he lord of worldes twyës fyve!
Swich wreche on hem, for fecching of Eleyne,
Ther shal be take, er that we hennes wende,
That Manes, which that goddes ben of peyne,
Shal been agast that Grekes wol hem shende.
And men shul drede, un-to the worldes ende,
From hennes-forth to ravisshe any quene,
So cruel shal our wreche on hem be sene.
And but-if Calkas lede us with ambages,
That is to seyn, with double wordes slye,
Swich as men clepe a "word with two visages,"
Ye shul wel knowen that I nought ne lye,
And al this thing right seen it with your yë,
And that anon; ye nil not trowe how sone;
Now taketh heed, for it is for to done.
What wene ye your wyse fader wolde
Han yeven Antenor for yow anon,
If he ne wiste that the citee sholde

Destroyed been? Why, nay, so mote I goon!
 He knew ful wel ther shal not scapen oon
 That Troyan is; and for the grete fere,
 He dorste not, ye dwelte lenger there.
 What wole ye more, lufsom lady dere?
 Lat Troye and Troyan fro your herte pace!
 Dryf out that bittre hope, and make good chere,
 And clepe ayein the beautee of your face,
 That ye with salte teres so deface.
 For Troye is brought in swich a Iupartye,
 That, it to save, is now no remedye.
 And thenketh wel, ye shal in Grekes finde,
 A more parfit love, er it be night,
 Than any Troyan is, and more kinde,
 And bet to serven yow wol doon his might.
 And if ye vouche sauf, my lady bright,
 I wol ben he to serven yow my-selve,
 Ye, lever than be lord of Greces twelve!
 And with that word he gan to waxen reed,
 And in his speche a litel wight he quook,
 And caste a-syde a litel wight his heed,
 And stinte a whyle; and afterward awook,
 And sobreliche on hir he threw his look,
 And seyde, 'I am, al be it yow no Ioye,
 As gentil man as any wight in Troye.
 For if my fader Tydeus,' he seyde,
 'Y-lived hadde, I hadde been, er this,
 Of Calidoine and Arge a king, Criseyde!
 And so hope I that I shal yet, y-wis.
 But he was slayn, alas! the more harm is,
 Unhappily at Thebes al to rathe,
 Polymites and many a man to scathe.
 But herte myn, sin that I am your man,
 And been the ferste of whom I seche grace,
 To serven you as hertely as I can,
 And ever shal, whyl I to live have space,
 So, er that I departe out of this place,
 Ye wol me graunte, that I may to-morwe,
 At bettre leyser, telle yow my sorwe.'
 What shold I telle his wordes that he seyde?
 He spak y-now, for o day at the meste;
 It preveth wel, he spak so that Criseyde
 Graunted, on the morwe, at his requeste,
 For to speken with him at the leste,
 So that he nolde speke of swich matere;
 And thus to him she seyde, as ye may here:
 As she that hadde hir herte on Troilus
 So faste, that ther may it noon arace;
 And straungely she spak, and seyde thus:
 'O Diomedes, I love that ilke place
 Ther I was born; and loves, for his grace,
 Deliver it sone of al that doth it care!
 God, for thy might, so leve it wel to fare!
 That Grekes wolde hir wraththe on Troye wreke,
 If that they mighte, I knowe it wel, y-wis.

But it shal not bifallen as ye speke;
And god to-forn, and ferther over this,
I wot my fader wys and redy is;
And that he me hath bought, as ye me tolde,
So dere, I am the more un-to him holde.
That Grekes been of heigh condicioun,
I woot eek wel; but certein, men shal finde
As worthy folk with-inne Troye toun,
As conning, and as parfit and as kinde,
As been bitwixen Orcades and Inde.
And that ye coude wel your lady serve,
I trowe eek wel, hir thank for to deserve.
But as to speke of love, y-wis,' she seyde,
'I hadde a lord, to whom I wedded was,
The whos myn herte al was, til that he deyde;
And other love, as helpe me now Pallas,
Ther in myn herte nis, ne never was.
And that ye been of noble and heigh kinrede,
I have wel herd it tellen, out of drede.
And that doth me to han so gret a wonder,
That ye wol scornen any womman so.
Eek, god wot, love and I be fer a-sonder;
I am disposed bet, so mote I go,
Un-to my deeth, to pleyne and maken wo.
What I shal after doon, I can not seye;
But trewely, as yet me list not pleye.
Myn herte is now in tribulacioun,
And ye in armes bisy, day by day.
Here-after, whan ye wonnen han the toun,
Paraunter, thanne so it happen may,
That whan I see that I never er say,
Than wole I werke that I never wroughte!
This word to yow y-nough suffysen oughte.
To-morwe eek wol I speke with yow fayn,
So that ye touchen nought of this matere.
And whan yow list, ye may come here ayeyn;
And, er ye gon, thus muche I seye yow here:
As helpe me Pallas with hir heres clere,
If that I sholde of any Greek han routhe,
It sholde be your-selven, by my trouthe!
I sey not therfore that I wol yow love,
Ne I sey not nay, but in conclusioun,
I mene wel, by god that sit above:'—
And ther-with-al she caste hir eyen down,
And gan to syke, and seyde, 'O Troye toun,
Yet bidde I god, in quiete and in reste
I may yow seen, or do myn herte breste.'
But in effect, and shortly for to seye,
This Diomede al freshly newe ayeyn
Gan pressen on, and faste hir mercy preyre;
And after this, the sothe for to seyn,
Hir glove he took, of which he was ful fayn.
And fynally, whan it was waxen eve,
And al was wel, he roos and took his leve.
The brighte Venus folwede and ay taughte

The wey, ther brode Phebus down alighte;
 And Cynthea hir char-hors over-raughte
 To whirle out of the Lyon, if she mighte;
 And Signifer his candeles shewed brighte,
 Whan that Criseyde un-to hir bedde wente
 In-with hir fadres faire brighte tente.
 Retorning in hir soule ay up and down
 The wordes of this sodein Diomede,
 His greet estat, and peril of the toun,
 And that she was allone and hadde nede
 Of freendes help; and thus bigan to brede
 The cause why, the sothe for to telle,
 That she tok fully purpos for to dwelle.
 The morwe com, and goostly for to speke,
 This Diomede is come un-to Criseyde,
 And shortly, lest that ye my tale breke,
 So wel he for him-selve spak and seyde,
 That alle hir sykes sore adoun he leyde.
 And fynally, the sothe for to seyne,
 He refte hir of the grete of al hir peyne.
 And after this the story telleth us,
 That she him yaf the faire baye stede,
 The which he ones wan of Troilus;
 And eek a broche (and that was litel nede)
 That Troilus was, she yaf this Diomede.
 And eek, the bet from sorwe him to releve,
 She made him were a pencil of hir sleve.
 I finde eek in the stories elles-where,
 Whan through the body hurt was Diomede
 Of Troilus, tho weep she many a tere,
 Whan that she saugh his wyde woundes blede;
 And that she took to kepen him good hede,
 And for to hele him of his sorwes smerte.
 Men seyn, I not, that she yaf him hir herte.
 But trewely, the story telleth us,
 Ther made never womman more wo
 Than she, whan that she falsed Troilus.
 She seyde, 'allas! for now is clene a-go
 My name of trouthe in love, for ever-mo!
 For I have falsed oon, the gentileste
 That ever was, and oon the worthieste!
 Allas, of me, un-to the worldes ende,
 Shal neither been y-written nor y-songe
 No good word, for thise bokes wol me shende.
 O, rolled shal I been on many a tonge;
 Through-out the world my belle shal be ronge;
 And wommen most wol hate me of alle.
 Allas, that swich a cas me sholde falle!
 They wol seyn, in as mucche as in me is,
 I have hem don dishonour, weylawey!
 Al be I not the firste that dide amis,
 What helpeth that to do my blame away?
 But sin I see there is no bettre way,
 And that to late is now for me to rewe,
 To Diomede algate I wol be trewe.

But Troilus, sin I no better may,
And sin that thus departen ye and I,
Yet preye I god, so yeve yow right good day
As for the gentileste, trewely,
That ever I say, to serven feithfully,
And best can ay his lady honour kepe:’—
And with that word she brast anon to wepe.
’And certes, yow ne haten shal I never,
And freendes love, that shal ye han of me,
And my good word, al mighte I liven ever.
And, trewely, I wolde sory be
For to seen yow in adversitee.
And giltelees, I woot wel, I yow leve;
But al shal passe; and thus take I my leve.’
But trewely, how longe it was bitwene,
That she for-sook him for this Diomede,
Ther is non auctor telleth it, I wene.
Take every man now to his bokes hede;
He shal no terme finden, out of drede.
For though that he bigan to wowe hir sone,
Er he hir wan, yet was ther more to done.
Ne me ne list this sely womman chyde
Ferther than the story wol devyse.
Hir name, alas! is publissed so wyde,
That for hir gilt it oughte y-now suffyse.
And if I mighte excuse hir any wyse,
For she so sory was for hir untrouthe,
Y-wis, I wolde excuse hir yet for routhe.
This Troilus, as I biforn have told,
Thus dryveth forth, as wel as he hath might.
But often was his herte hoot and cold,
And namely, that ilke nynthe night,
Which on the morwe she hadde him byhight
To come ayein: god wot, ful litel reste
Hadde he that night; no-thing to slepe him leste.
The laurer-crowned Phebus, with his hete,
Gan, in his course ay upward as he wente,
To warmen of the est see the wawes wete;
And Nisus doughter song with fresh entente,
Whan Troilus his Pandare after sente;
And on the walles of the toun they pleyde,
To loke if they can seen ought of Criseyde.
Til it was noon, they stoden for to see
Who that ther come; and every maner wight,
That cam fro fer, they seyden it was she,
Til that they coude knowen him a-right.
Now was his herte dul, now was it light;
And thus by-iaped stonden for to stare
Aboute nought, this Troilus and Pandare.
To Pandarus this Troilus tho seyde,
’For ought I wot, bi-for noon, sikerly,
In-to this toun ne comth nought here Criseyde.
She hath y-now to done, hardily,
To winnen from hir fader, so trowe I;
Hir olde fader wol yet make hir dyne

Er that she go; god yeve his herte pyne!
 Pandare answerde, 'it may wel be, certeyn;
 And for-thy lat us dyne, I thee biseche;
 And after noon than mayst thou come ayeyn.
 And hoom they go, with-oute more speche;
 And comen ayein, but longe may they seche
 Er that they finde that they after cape;
 Fortune hem bothe thenketh for to lape.
 Quod Troilus, 'I see wel now, that she
 Is taried with hir olde fader so,
 That er she come, it wol neigh even be.
 Com forth, I wol un-to the yate go.
 Thise portours been unkonninge ever-mo;
 And I wol doon hem holden up the yate
 As nought ne were, al-though she come late.'
 The day goth faste, and after that comth eve,
 And yet com nought to Troilus Criseyde.
 He loketh forth by hegge, by tree, by greve,
 And fer his heed over the wal he leyde.
 And at the laste he torned him, and seyde,
 'By god, I woot hir mening now, Pandare!
 Al-most, y-wis, al newe was my care.
 Now douteles, this lady can hir good;
 I woot, she meneth ryden prively.
 I comende hir wysdom, by myn hood!
 She wol not maken peple nycely
 Gaure on hir, whan she comth; but softly
 By nighte in-to the toun she thenketh ryde.
 And, dere brother, thenk not longe to abyde.
 We han nought elles for to don, y-wis.
 And Pandarus, now woltow trowen me?
 Have here my trouthe, I see hir! yond she is.
 Heve up thyn eyen, man! maystow not see?'
 Pandare answerde, 'nay, so mote I thee!
 Al wrong, by god; what seystow, man, wher art?
 That I see yond nis but a fare-cart.'
 'Allas, thou seist right sooth,' quod Troilus;
 'But hardely, it is not al for nought
 That in myn herte I now reioyse thus.
 It is ayein som good I have a thought.
 Noot I not how, but sin that I was wrought,
 Ne felte I swich a confort, dar I seye;
 She comth to-night, my lyf, that dorste I leye!'
 Pandare answerde, 'it may be wel, y-nough';
 And held with him of al that ever he seyde;
 But in his herte he thoughte, and softe lough,
 And to him-self ful sobrelly he seyde:
 'From hasel-wode, ther Ioly Robin pleyde,
 Shal come al that that thou abydest here;
 Ye, fare-wel al the snow of ferne yere!'
 The wardein of the yates gan to calle
 The folk which that with-oute the yates were,
 And bad hem dryven in hir bestes alle,
 Or al the night they moste bleven there.
 And fer with-in the night, with many a tere,

This Troilus gan hoomward for to ryde;
For wel he seeth it helpeth nought tabyde.
But natheles, he gladded him in this;
He thoughte he misaccounted hadde his day,
And seyde, 'I understonde have al a-mis.
For thilke night I last Criseyde say,
She seyde, "I shal ben here, if that I may,
Er that the mone, O dere herte swete!
The Lyon passe, out of this Ariete."
For which she may yet holde al hir biheste.'
And on the morwe un-to the yate he wente,
And up and down, by west and eek by este,
Up-on the walles made he many a wente.
But al for nought; his hope alwey him blente;
For which at night, in sorwe and sykes sore
He wente him hoom, with-outen any more.
This hope al clene out of his herte fledde,
He nath wher-on now lenger for to honge;
But for the peyne him thoughte his herte bledde,
So were his throwes sharpe and wonder stronge.
For when he saugh that she abood so longe,
He niste what he iuggen of it mighte,
Sin she hath broken that she him bihighte.
The thridde, ferthe, fifte, sixte day
After tho dayes ten, of which I tolde,
Bitwixen hope and drede his herte lay,
Yet som-what trustinge on hir hestes olde.
But whan he saugh she nolde hir terme holde,
He can now seen non other remedye,
But for to shape him sone for to dye.
Ther-with the wikked spirit, god us blesse,
Which that men clepeth wode lalousye,
Gan in him crepe, in al this hevinesse;
For which, by-cause he wolde sone dye,
He ne eet ne dronk, for his malencolye,
And eek from every companye he fledde;
This was the lyf that al the tyme he ledde.
He so defet was, that no maner man
Unnethe mighte him knowe ther he wente;
So was he lene, and ther-to pale and wan,
And feble, that he walketh by potente;
And with his ire he thus him-selven shente.
And who-so axed him wher-of him smerte,
He seyde, his harm was al aboute his herte.
Pryam ful ofte, and eek his moder dere,
His bretheren and his sustren gonne him freyne
Why he so sorwful was in al his chere,
And what thing was the cause of al his peyne?
But al for nought; he nolde his cause pleyne,
But seyde, he felte a grevous maladye
A-boute his herte, and fayn he wolde dye.
So on a day he leyde him down to slepe,
And so bifel that in his sleep him thoughte,
That in a forest faste he welk to wepe
For love of hir that him these peynes wroughte;

And up and down as he the forest soughte,
 He mette he saugh a boor with tuskes grete,
 That sleep ayein the brighte sonnes hete.
 And by this boor, faste in his armes folde,
 Lay kissing ay his lady bright Criseyde:
 For sorwe of which, whan he it gan biholde,
 And for despyt, out of his slepe he breyde,
 And loude he cryde on Pandarus, and seyde,
 'O Pandarus, now knowe I crop and rote!
 I nam but deed, ther nis non other bote!
 My lady bright Criseyde hath me bitrayed,
 In whom I trusted most of any wight,
 She elles-where hath now hir herte apayed;
 The blisful goddes, through hir grete might,
 Han in my dreem y-shewed it ful right.
 Thus in my dreem Criseyde I have biholde'—
 And al this thing to Pandarus he tolde.
 'O my Criseyde, allas! what subtiltee,
 What newe lust, what beautee, what science,
 What wratthe of iuste cause have ye to me?
 What gilt of me, whal fel experience
 Hath fro me raft, allas! thyn advertence?
 O trust, O feyth, O depe asëuraunce,
 Who hath me reft Criseyde, al my plesaunce?
 Allas! why leet I you from hennes go,
 For which wel neigh out of my wit I breyde?
 Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
 God wot I wende, O lady bright, Criseyde,
 That every word was gospel that ye seyde!
 But who may bet bigylen, if him liste,
 Than he on whom men weneth best to triste?
 What shal I doon, my Pandarus, allas!
 I fele now so sharpe a newe peyne,
 Sin that ther is no remedie in this cas,
 That bet were it I with myn hondes tweyne
 My-selven slow, than alwey thus to pleyne.
 For through my deeth my wo sholde han an ende,
 Ther every day with lyf my-self I shende.'
 Pandare answerde and seyde, 'allas the whyle
 That I was born; have I not seyd er this,
 That dremes many a maner man bigyle?
 And why? for folk expounden hem a-mis.
 How darstow seyn that fals thy lady is,
 For any dreem, right for thyn owene drede?
 Lat be this thought, thou canst no dremes rede.
 Paraunter, ther thou dremest of this boor,
 It may so be that it may signifye
 Hir fader, which that old is and eek hoor,
 Ayein the sonne lyth, on poynt to dye,
 And she for sorwe ginneth wepe and crye,
 And kisseth him, ther he lyth on the grounde;
 Thus shuldestow thy dreem a-right expounde.'
 'How mighte I thanne do?' quod Troilus,
 'To knowe of this, ye, were it never so lyte?'
 'Now seystow wysly,' quod this Pandarus,

'My reed is this, sin thou canst wel endyte,
That hastely a lettre thou hir wryte,
Thorugh which thou shalt wel bringen it aboute,
To knowe a sooth of that thou art in doute.
And see now why; for this I dar wel seyn,
That if so is that she untrewen be,
I can not trowe that she wol wryte ayein.
And if she wryte, thou shalt ful sone see,
As whether she hath any libertee
To come ayein, or elles in som clause,
If she be let, she wol assigne a cause.
Thou hast not writen hir sin that she wente,
Nor she to thee, and this I dorste leye,
Ther may swich cause been in hir entente,
That hardely thou wolt thy-selven seye,
That hir a-bood the beste is for yow tweye.
Now wryte hir thanne, and thou shalt fele sone
A sothe of al; ther is no more to done.'
Acorded been to this conclusioun,
And that anon, these ilke lordes two;
And hastely sit Troilus adoun,
And rolleth in his herte to and fro,
How he may best discryven hir his wo.
And to Criseyde, his owene lady dere,
He wroot right thus, and seyde as ye may here.
'Right fresshe flour, whos I have been and shal,
With-outen part of elles-where servyse,
With herte, body, lyf, lust, thought, and al;
I, woful wight, in every humble wyse
That tonge telle or herte may devyse,
As ofte as matere occupyeth place,
Me recomaunde un-to your noble grace.
Lyketh it yow to witen, swete herte,
As ye wel knowe how longe tyme agoon
That ye me lafte in aspre peynes smerte,
Whan that ye wente, of which yet bote noon
Have I non had, but ever wers bigoon
Fro day to day am I, and so mot dwelle,
While it yow list, of wele and wo my welle!
For which to yow, with dredful herte trewe,
I wryte, as he that sorwe dryfth to wryte,
My wo, that every houre encreseth newe,
Compleyninge as I dar or can endyte.
And that defaced is, that may ye wyte
The teres, which that fro myn eyen reyne,
That wolde speke, if that they coude, and pleyne.
Yow first biseche I, that your eyen clere
To look on this defouled ye not holde;
And over al this, that ye, my lady dere,
Wol vouche-sauf this lettre to biholde.
And by the cause eek of my cares colde,
That sleeth my wit, if ought amis me asterte,
For-yeve it me, myn owene swete herte.
If any servant dorste or oughte of right
Up-on his lady pitously compleyne,

Than wene I, that ich oughte be that wight,
 Considered this, that ye these monthes tweyne
 Han taried, ther ye seyden, sooth to seyne,
 But dayes ten ye nolde in ost soiourne,
 But in two monthes yet ye not retourne.
 But for-as-muche as me mot nedes lyke
 Al that yow list, I dar not pleyne more,
 But humbely with sorwful sykes syke;
 Yow wryte ich myn unresty sorwes sore,
 Fro day to day desyring ever-more
 To knowen fully, if your wil it were,
 How ye han ferd and doon, whyl ye be there.
 The whos wel-fare and hele eek god encesse
 In honour swich, that upward in degree
 It growe alwey, so that it never cesse;
 Right as your herte ay can, my lady free,
 Devyse, I prey to god so mote it be.
 And graunte it that ye sone up-on me rewe
 As wisly as in al I am yow trewe.
 And if yow lyketh knowen of the fare
 Of me, whos wo ther may no wight discryve,
 I can no more but, cheste of every care,
 At wrytinge of this lettre I was on-lyve,
 Al redy out my woful gost to dryve;
 Which I delaye, and holde him yet in honde,
 Upon the sight of matere of your sonde.
 Myn eyen two, in veyn with which I see,
 Of sorweful teres salte arn waxen welles;
 My song, in pleynte of myn adversitee;
 My good, in harm; myn ese eek waxen helle is.
 My Ioye, in wo; I can sey yow nought elles,
 But turned is, for which my lyf I warie,
 Everich Ioye or ese in his contrarie.
 Which with your cominge hoom ayein to Troye
 Ye may redresse, and, more a thousand sythe
 Than ever ich hadde, encressen in me Ioye.
 For was ther never herte yet so blythe
 To han his lyf, as I shal been as swythe
 As I yow see; and, though no maner routhe
 Commeve yow, yet thinketh on your trouthe.
 And if so be my gilt hath deeth deserved,
 Or if you list no more up-on me see,
 In guerdon yet of that I have you served,
 Biseche I yow, myn hertes lady free,
 That here-upon ye wolden wryte me,
 For love of god, my righte lode-sterre,
 Ther deeth may make an ende of al my werre.
 If other cause aught doth yow for to dwelle,
 That with your lettre ye me recomforte;
 For though to me your absence is an helle,
 With pacience I wol my wo comporte.
 And with your lettre of hope I wol desporte.
 Now wryteth, swete, and lat me thus not pleyne;
 With hope, or deeth, delivereth me fro peyne.
 Y-wis, myn owene dere herte trewe,

I woot that, whan ye next up-on me see,
So lost have I myn hele and eek myn hewe,
Criseyde shal nought conne knowe me!
Y-wis, myn hertes day, my lady free,
So thursteth ay myn herte to biholde
Your beautee, that my lyf unnethe I holde.
I sey no more, al have I for to seye
To you wel more than I telle may;
But whether that ye do me live or deye,
Yet pray I god, so yeve yow right good day.
And fareth wel, goodly fayre fresshe may,
As ye that lyf or deeth me may comaunde;
And to your trouthe ay I me recomaunde
With hele swich that, but ye yeven me
The same hele, I shal noon hele have.
In you lyth, whan yow list that it so be,
The day in which me clothen shal my grave.
In yow my lyf, in yow might for to save
Me from disese of alle peynes smerte;
And fare now wel, myn owene swete herte!
This lettre forth was sent un-to Criseyde,
Of which hir answee in effect was this;
Ful pitously she wroot ayein, and seyde,
That al-so sone as that she might, y-wis,
She wolde come, and mende al that was mis.
And fynally she wroot and seyde him thanne,
She wolde come, ye, but she niste whanne.
But in hir lettre made she swich festes,
That wonder was, and swereth she loveth him best,
Of which he fond but botmelees bihestes.
But Troilus, thou mayst now, est or west,
Pype in an ivy leef, if that thee lest;
Thus gooth the world; god shilde us fro mischaunce,
And every wight that meneth trouthe avaunce!
Encresen gan the wo fro day to night
Of Troilus, for tarynge of Criseyde;
And lessen gan his hope and eek his might,
For which al doun he in his bed him leyde;
He ne eet, ne dronk, ne sleep, ne word he seyde,
Imagininge ay that she was unkinde;
For which wel neigh he wex out of his minde.
This dreem, of which I told have eek biforn,
May never come out of his remembraunce;
He thoughte ay wel he hadde his lady lorn,
And that Ioves, of his purveyaunce,
Him shewed hadde in sleep the signiffiaunce
Of hir untrouthe and his disaventure,
And that the boor was shewed him in figure.
For which he for Sibille his suster sente,
That called was Cassandre eek al aboute;
And al his dreem he tolde hir er he stente,
And hir bisoughte assoilen him the doute
Of the stronge boor, with tuskes stoute;
And fynally, with-inne a litel stounde,
Cassandre him gan right thus his dreem expounde.

She gan first smyle, and seyde, 'O brother dere,
 If thou a sooth of this desyrest knowe,
 Thou most a fewe of olde stories here,
 To purpos, how that fortune over-throwe
 Hath lordes olde; through which, with-inne a throwe,
 Thou wel this boor shalt knowe, and of what kinde
 He comen is, as men in bokes finde.
 Diane, which that wrooth was and in ire
 For Grekes nolde doon hir sacrificyse,
 Ne encens up-on hir auter sette a-fyre,
 She, for that Grekes gonne hir so dispyse,
 Wrak hir in a wonder cruel wyse.
 For with a boor as greet as oxe in stalle
 She made up frete hir corn and vynes alle.
 To slee this boor was al the contree reysed,
 A-monges which ther com, this boor to see,
 A mayde, oon of this world the best y-preysed;
 And Meleagre, lord of that contree,
 He lovede so this fresshe mayden free
 That with his manhod, er he wolde stente,
 This boor he slow, and hir the heed he sente;
 Of which, as olde bokes tellen us,
 Ther roos a kontek and a greet envye;
 And of this lord descended Tydeus
 By ligne, or elles olde bokes lye;
 But how this Meleagre gan to dye
 Thorugh his moder, wol I yow not telle,
 For al to long it were for to dwelle.'

[*Argument of the 12 Books of Statius' Thebais.*]

Associat profugum Tideo primus Politem;
Tidea legatum docet insidiasque secundus;
 Tercius **Hemoniden canit et vates latitantes;**
 Quartus **habet reges ineuntes prelia septem;**
Mox furie Lenne quinto narratur et anguis;
Archimori bustum sexto ludique leguntur;
Dat Graios Thebes et vatem septimus vmbris;
 Octauo **cecidit Tideus, spes, vita Pelasgis;**
Ypomodon nono moritur cum Parthonopeo;
Fulmine percussus, decimo Capaneus superatur;
 Vndecimo **sese perimunt per vulnera fratres;**
Argiuam flentem narrat duodenus et ignem.

She toldë eek how Tydeus, er she stente,
 Un-to the stronge citee of Thebes,
 To cleyne kingdom of the citee, wente,
 For his felawe, daun Polymites,
 Of which the brother, daun Ethyocles
 Ful wrongfully of Thebes held the strengthe;
 This tolde she by proces, al by lengthe.
 She tolde eek how Hemonides asterte,
 Whan Tydeus slough fifty knightes stoute.
 She told eek al the prophesyes by herte,
 And how that sevene kinges, with hir route,
 Bisegeden the citee al aboute;
 And of the holy serpent, and the welle,
 And of the furies, al she gan him telle.

Of Archimoris buryinge and the pleyes,
And how Amphiorax fil through the grounde,
How Tydeus was slayn, lord of Argeyes,
And how Ypomedoun in litel stounde
Was dreynt, and deed Parthonope of wounde;
And also how Cappanëus the proude
With thonder-dint was slayn, that cryde loude.
She gan eek telle him how that either brother,
Ethyocles and Polimyte also,
At a scarmyche, eche of hem slough other,
And of Argyves wepinge and hir wo;
And how the town was brent she tolde eek tho.
And so descendeth doun from gestes olde
To Diomede, and thus she spak and tolde.
'This ilke boor bitokneth Diomede,
Tydeus sone, that doun descended is
Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede.
And thy lady, wher-so she be, y-wis,
This Diomede hir herte hath, and she his.
Weep if thou wilt, or leef; for, out of doute,
This Diomede is inne, and thou art oute.'
'Thou seyst nat sooth,' quod he, 'thou sorceresse,
With al thy false goost of prophesye!
Thou wenest been a greet devyneresse;
Now seestow not this fool of fantasye
Peyneth hir on ladyes for to lye?
Away,' quod he, 'ther Loves yeve thee sorwe!
Thou shalt be fals, paraunter, yet to-morwe!
As wel thou mightest lyen on Alceste,
That was of creatures, but men lye,
That ever weren, kindest and the beste.
For whanne hir housbonde was in Iupartye
To dye him-self, but-if she wolde dye,
She chees for him to dye and go to helle,
And starf anoon, as us the bokes telle.'
Cassandre goth, and he with cruel herte
For-yat his wo, for angre of hir speche;
And from his bed al sodeinly he sterte,
As though al hool him hadde y-mad a leche.
And day by day he gan enquire and seche
A sooth of this, with al his fulle cure;
And thus he dryeth forth his aventure.
Fortune, whiche that permutacioun
Of thinges hath, as it is hir committed
Through purveyaunce and disposicioun
Of heighe love, as regnes shal ben flitted
Fro folk in folk, or whan they shal ben smitted,
Gan pulle away the fetheres brighte of Troye
Fro day to day, til they ben bare of Ioye.
Among al this, the fyn of the parodie
Of Ector gan approchen wonder blyve;
The fate wolde his soule sholde unbodie,
And shapen hadde a mene it out to dryve;
Ayeins which fate him helpeth not to stryve;
But on a day to fighten gan he wende,

At which, allas! he caughte his lyves ende.
 For which me thinketh every maner wight
 That haunteth armes oughte to biwayle
 The deeth of him that was so noble a knight;
 For as he drough a king by thaventayle,
 Unwar of this, Achilles through the mayle
 And through the body gan him for to ryve;
 And thus this worthy knight was brought of lyve.
 For whom, as olde bokes tellen us,
 Was mad swich wo, that tonge it may not telle;
 And namely, the sorwe of Troilus,
 That next him was of worthinesse welle.
 And in this wo gan Troilus to dwelle,
 That, what for sorwe, and love, and for unreste,
 Ful ofte a day he bad his herte breste.
 But natheles, though he gan him dispeyre,
 And dradde ay that his lady was untrewre,
 Yet ay on hir his herte gan repeyre.
 And as these loveres doon, he soughte ay newe
 To gete ayein Criseyde, bright of hewe.
 And in his herte he wente hir excusinge,
 That Calkas causede al hir tarynge.
 And ofte tyme he was in purpos grete
 Him-selven lyk a pilgrim to disgyse,
 To seen hir; but he may not contrefete
 To been unknowen of folk that weren wyse,
 Ne finde excuse aright that may suffyse,
 If he among the Grekes knowen were;
 For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.
 To hir he wroot yet ofte tyme al newe
 Ful pitously, he lefte it nought for slouthe,
 Biseching hir that, sin that he was trewe,
 She wolde come ayein and holde hir trouthe.
 For which Criseyde up-on a day, for routhe,
 I take it so, touchinge al this matere,
 Wrot him ayein, and seyde as ye may here.
 'Cupydes sone, ensample of goodlihede,
 O swerd of knighthod, sours of gentillesse!
 How mighte a wight in torment and in drede
 And helelees, yow sende as yet gladnesse?
 I hertelees, I syke, I in distresse;
 Sin ye with me, nor I with yow may dele,
 Yow neither sende ich herte may nor hele.
 Your lettres ful, the papir al y-pleynted,
 Conseyved hath myn hertes piëtee;
 I have eek seyn with teres al depeynted
 Your lettre, and how that ye requeren me
 To come ayein, which yet ne may not be.
 But why, lest that this lettre founden were,
 No mencioune ne make I now, for fere.
 Grevous to me, god woot, is your unreste,
 Your haste, and that, the goddes ordenaunce,
 It semeth not ye take it for the beste.
 Nor other thing nis in your remembraunce,
 As thinketh me, but only your plesaunce.

But beth not wrooth, and that I yow biseche;
For that I tarie, is al for wikked speche.
For I have herd wel more than I wende,
Touchinge us two, how thinges han y-stonde;
Which I shal with dissimulinge amende.
And beth nought wrooth, I have eek understonde,
How ye ne doon but holden me in honde.
But now no fors, I can not in yow gesse
But alle trouthe and alle gentillesse.
Comen I wol, but yet in swich disioynte
I stonde as now, that what yeer or what day
That this shal be, that can I not apoynte.
But in effect, I prey yow, as I may,
Of your good word and of your frendship ay.
For trewely, whyl that my lyf may dure,
As for a freend, ye may in me assure.
Yet preye I yow on yvel ye ne take,
That it is short which that I to yow wryte;
I dar not, ther I am, wel lettres make,
Ne never yet ne coude I wel endyte.
Eek greet effect men wryte in place lyte.
Thentente is al, and nought the lettres space;
And fareth now wel, god have you in his grace!
This Troilus this lettre thoughte al straunge,
Whan he it saugh, and sorwefully he sighte;
Him thoughte it lyk a kalendes of chaunge;
But fynally, he ful ne trowen mighte
That she ne wolde him holden that she highte;
For with ful yvel wil list him to leve
That loveth wel, in swich cas, though him greve.
But natheles, men seyn that, at the laste,
For any thing, men shal the sothe see;
And swich a cas bitidde, and that as faste,
That Troilus wel understood that she
Nas not so kinde as that hir oughte be.
And fynally, he woot now, out of doute,
That al is lost that he hath been aboute.
Stood on a day in his malencolye
This Troilus, and in suspeciouun
Of hir for whom he wende for to dye.
And so bifel, that through-out Troye toun,
As was the gyse, y-bore was up and doun
A maner cote-armure, as seyth the storie,
Biforn Deiphebe, in signe of his victorie,
The whiche cote, as telleth Lollius,
Deiphebe it hadde y-rent from Diomede
The same day; and whan this Troilus
It saugh, he gan to taken of it hede,
Avysing of the lengthe and of the brede,
And al the werk; but as he gan biholde,
Ful sodeinly his herte gan to colde,
As he that on the coler fond with-inne
A broche, that he Criseyde yaf that morwe
That she from Troye moste nedes twinne,
In remembraunce of him and of his sorwe;

And she him leyde ayein hir feyth to borwe
 To kepe it ay; but now, ful wel he wiste,
 His lady nas no lenger on to triste.
 He gooth him hoom, and gan ful sone sende
 For Pandarus; and al this newe chaunce,
 And of this broche, he tolde him word and ende,
 Compleyninge of hir hertes variaunce,
 His longe love, his trouthe, and his penaunce;
 And after deeth, with-outen wordes more,
 Ful faste he cryde, his reste him to restore.
 Than spak he thus, 'O lady myn Criseyde,
 Wher is your feyth, and wher is your bihest?
 Wher is your love, wher is your trouthe,' he seyde;
 'Of Diomedes have ye now al this feste!
 Allas, I wolde have trowed at the leste,
 That, sin ye nolde in trouthe to me stonde,
 That ye thus nolde han holden me in honde!
 Who shal now trowe on any othes mo?
 Allas, I never wolde han wend, er this,
 That ye, Criseyde, coude han chaunged so;
 Ne, but I hadde a-gilt and doon amis,
 So cruel wende I not your herte, y-wis,
 To slee me thus; allas, your name of trouthe
 Is now for-doon, and that is al my routhe.
 Was ther non other broche yow liste lete
 To feffe with your newe love,' quod he,
 'But thilke broche that I, with teres wete,
 Yow yaf, as for a remembraunce of me?
 Non other cause, allas, ne hadde ye
 But for despyt, and eek for that ye mente
 Al-outrely to shewen your entente!
 Through which I see that clene out of your minde
 Ye han me cast, and I ne can nor may,
 For al this world, with-in myn herte finde
 To unloven yow a quarter of a day!
 In cursed tyme I born was, weylaway!
 That ye, that doon me al this wo endure,
 Yet love I best of any creature.
 Now god,' quod he, 'me sende yet the grace
 That I may meten with this Diomedes!
 And trewely, if I have might and space,
 Yet shal I make, I hope, his sydes blede.
 O god,' quod he, 'that oughtest taken hede
 To fortheren trouthe, and wronges to punyce,
 Why niltow doon a vengeaunce on this vyce?
 O Pandare, that in dremes for to triste
 Me blamed hast, and wont art ofte up-breyde,
 Now maystow see thy-selve, if that thee liste,
 How trewe is now thy nece, bright Criseyde!
 In sondry formes, god it woot,' he seyde,
 'The goddes shewen bothe loye and tene
 In slepe, and by my dreame it is now sene.
 And certaynly, with-oute more speche,
 From hennes-forth, as ferforth as I may,
 Myn owene deeth in armes wol I seche;

I recche not how sone be the day!
But trewely, Criseyde, swete may,
Whom I have ay with al my might y-served,
That ye thus doon, I have it nought deserved.
This Pandarus, that alle these thinges herde,
And wiste wel he seyde a sooth of this,
He nought a word ayein to him answerde;
For sory of his frendes sorwe he is,
And shamed, for his nece hath doon a-mis;
And stant, astoned of these causes tweye,
As stille as stoon; a word ne coude he seye.
But at the laste thus he spak, and seyde,
'My brother dere, I may thee do no-more.
What shulde I seyn? I hate, y-wis, Criseyde!
And god wot, I wol hate hir evermore!
And that thou me bisoughtest doon of yore,
Havinge un-to myn honour ne my reste
Right no reward, I dide al that thee leste.
If I dide ought that mighte lyken thee,
It is me leef; and of this treson now,
God woot, that it a sorwe is un-to me!
And dredelees, for hertes ese of yow,
Right fayn wolde I amende it, wiste I how.
And fro this world, almighty god I preye,
Delivere hir sone; I can no-more seye.'
Gret was the sorwe and pleynt of Troilus;
But forth hir cours fortune ay gan to holde.
Criseyde loveth the sone of Tydeus,
And Troilus mot wepe in cares colde.
Swich is this world; who-so it can biholde,
In eche estat is litel hertes reste;
God leve us for to take it for the beste!
In many cruel batayle, out of drede,
Of Troilus, this ilke noble knight,
As men may in these olde bokes rede,
Was sene his knighthod and his grete might.
And dredelees, his ire, day and night,
Ful cruelly the Grekes ay aboute;
And alwey most this Diomed he soughte.
And ofte tyme, I finde that they mette
With bloody strokes and with wordes grete,
Assayinge how hir speres weren whette;
And god it woot, with many a cruel hete
Gan Troilus upon his helm to-bete.
But natheles, fortune it nought ne wolde,
Of otheres hond that either deyen sholde.—
And if I hadde y-taken for to wryte
The armes of this ilke worthy man,
Than wolde I of his batailles endyte.
But for that I to wryte first bigan
Of his love, I have seyde as that I can.
His worthy dedes, who-so list hem here,
Reed Dares, he can telle hem alle y-fere.
Bisechinge every lady bright of hewe,
And every gentil womman, what she be,

That al be that Criseyde was untrewē,
 That for that gilt she be not wrooth with me.
 Ye may hir gilt in othere bokes see;
 And gladlier I wol wryten, if yow leste,
 Penelopeës trouthe and good Alceste.
 Ne I sey not this al-only for these men,
 But most for wommen that bitraysed be
 Through false folk; god yeve hem sorwe, amen!
 That with hir grete wit and subtiltee
 Bitrayse yow! and this comveeth me
 To speke, and in effect yow alle I preye,
 Beth war of men, and herkeneth what I seye!—
 Go, litel book, go litel myn tregedie,
 Ther god thy maker yet, er that he dye,
 So sende might to make in som comedie!
 But litel book, no making thou nenvye,
 But subgit be to alle poesy;
 And kis the steppes, wher-as thou seest pace
 Virgile, Ovyde, Omer, Lucan, and Stace.
 And for ther is so greet diversitee
 In English and in wryting of our tonge,
 So preye I god that noon miswryte thee,
 Ne thee mismetre for defaute of tonge.
 And red wher-so thou be, or elles songe,
 That thou be understonde I god beseche!
 But yet to purpos of my rather speche.—
 The wraththe, as I began yow for to seye,
 Of Troilus, the Grekes boughten dere;
 For thousandes his hondes maden deye,
 As he that was with-outen any pere,
 Save Ector, in his tyme, as I can here.
 But weylaway, save only goddes wille,
 Dispitously him slough the fiers Achille.
 And whan that he was slayn in this manere,
 His lighte goost ful blisfully is went
 Up to the holownesse of the seventh spere,
 In convers letinge every element;
 And ther he saugh, with ful avysement,
 The erratik sterres, herkeninge armonye
 With sownes fulle of hevenish melodye.
 And doun from thennes faste he gan avyse
 This litel spot of erthe, that with the see
 Enbraced is, and fully gan despyse
 This wrecched world, and held al vanitee
 To respect of the pleyn felicitee
 That is in hevene above; and at the laste,
 Ther he was slayn, his loking doun he caste;
 And in him-self he lough right at the wo
 Of hem that wepten for his deeth so faste;
 And dampned al our werk that folweth so
 The blinde lust, the which that may not laste,
 And sholden al our herte on hevene caste.
 And forth he wente, shortly for to telle,
 Ther as Mercurie sorted him to dwelle.—
 Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love,

Swich fyn hath al his grete worthinesse;
Swich fyn hath his estat real above,
Swich fyn his lust, swich fyn hath his noblesse;
Swich fyn hath false worldes brotelnesse.
And thus bigan his lovinge of Criseyde,
As I have told, and in this wyse he deyde.
O yonge fresshe folkes, he or she,
In which that love up groweth with your age,
Repeyreth hoom from worldly vanitee,
And of your herte up-casteth the visage
To thilke god that after his image
Yow made, and thinketh al nis but a fayre
This world, that passeth sone as floures fayre.
And loveth him, the which that right for love
Upon a cros, our soules for to beye,
First starf, and roos, and sit in hevene a-bove;
For he nil falsen no wight, dar I seye,
That wol his herte al hoolly on him leye.
And sin he best to love is, and most meke,
What nedeth feyned loves for to seke?
Lo here, of Payens corsed olde rytes,
Lo here, what alle hir goddes may availle;
Lo here, these wrecched worldes appetytes;
Lo here, the fyn and guerdon for travaille
Of Iove, Appollo, of Mars, of swich rascaille!
Lo here, the forme of olde clerkes speche
In poetrye, if ye hir bokes seche.—
O moral Gower, this book I directe
To thee, and to the philosophical Strode,
To vouchen sauf, ther nede is, to corecte,
Of your benignitees and zeles gode.
And to that sothfast Crist, that starf on rode,
With al myn herte of mercy ever I preyre;
And to the lord right thus I speke and seye:
Thou oon, and two, and three, eterne on-lyve,
That regnest ay in three and two and oon,
Uncircumscrip, and al mayst circumscrip,
Us from visible and invisible foon
Defende; and to thy mercy, everichoon,
So make us, Iesus, for thy grace digne,
For love of mayde and moder thyn benigne! Amen.

Chaucer: Legend of Good Women

The prologe of .ix. goode Wimmen.

A thousand sythes have I herd men telle,
That ther is loye in heven, and peyne in helle;
And I acorde wel that hit be so;
But natheles, this wot I wel also,
That ther nis noon that dwelleth in this contree,
That either hath in helle or heven y-be,
Ne may of hit non other weyes witen,
But as he hath herd seyde, or founde hit writen;
For by assay ther may no man hit preve.
But goddes forbode, but men shulde leve
Wel more thing then men han seen with yē!
Men shal nat wenen every-thing a lyē
For that he seigh it nat of yore ago.
God wot, a thing is never the lesse so
Thogh every wight ne may hit nat y-see.
Bernard the monk ne saugh nat al, parde!
Than mote we to bokes that we finde,
Through which that olde thinges been in minde,
And to the doctrine of these olde wyse,
Yeven credence, in every skilful wyse,
And trowen on these olde aproved stories
Of holinesse, of regnes, of victories,
Of love, of hate, of other sundry thinges,
Of whiche I may not maken rehersinges.
And if that olde bokes were a-weye,
Y-loren were of remembraunce the keye.
Wel oghte us than on olde bokes leve,
Ther-as ther is non other assay by preve.
And, as for me, though that my wit be lyte,
On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
And in myn herte have hem in reverence;
And to hem yeve swich lust and swich credence,
That ther is wel unethe game noon
That from my bokes make me to goon,
But hit be other up-on the haly-day,
Or elles in the Ioly tyme of May;
Whan that I here the smale foules singe,
And that the floures ginne for to springe,
Farwel my studie, as lasting that sesoun!
Now have I therto this condicioun
That, of alle the floures in the mede,
Than love I most these floures whyte and rede,

Swiche as men callen daysies in our toun.
To hem have I so greet affeccoun,
As I seyde erst, whan comen is the May,
That in my bed ther daweth me no day
That I nam up, and walking in the mede
To seen these floures agein the sonne sprede,
Whan hit up-riseth by the morwe shene,
The longe day, thus walking in the grene.
This dayesye, of alle floures flour,
Fulfilde of vertu and of alle honour,
And ever y-lyke fair and fresh of hewe,
As wel in winter as in somer newe—
And whan the sonne ginneth for to weste,
Than closeth hit, and draweth hit to reste.
So sore hit is afered of the night,
Til on the morwe, that hit is dayes light.
Fain wolde I preisen, if I coude aright;
But wo is me, hit lyth nat in my might!
For wel I wot, that folk han her-beforn
Of making ropen, and lad a-wey the corn;
And I come after, glening here and there,
And am ful glad if I may finde an ere
Of any goodly word that they han left.
And, if hit happe me rehersen eft
That they han in her fresshe songes sayd,
I hope that they wil nat ben evel apayd,
Sith hit is seid in forthering and honour
Of hem that either serven leef or flour.
For trusteth wel, I ne have nat undertake
As of the leef, ageyn the flour, to make;
Ne of the flour to make, ageyn the leef,
No more than of the corn ageyn the sheef.
For, as to me, is leefer noon ne lother;
I am with-holde yit with never nother.
I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
That nis nothing the entent of my labour.
For this werk is al of another tunne,
Of olde story, er swich stryf was begunne.
But wherfor that I spak, to yeve credence
To bokes olde and doon hem reverence,
Is for men shulde autoritees beleve,
Ther as ther lyth non other assay by preve.
For myn entent is, or I fro yow fare,
The naked text in English to declare
Of many a story, or elles of many a geste,
As autours seyn; leveth hem if yow leste!
Whan passed was almost the month of May,
And I had romed, al the someres day,
The grene medew, of which that I yow tolde,
Upon the fresshe daysy to beholde,
And that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
And closed was the flour and goon to reste
For derknesse of the night, of which she dredde,
Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde;
And, in a litel erber that I have,

Y-benched newe with turves fresshe y-grave,
 I bad men schulde me my couche make;
 For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
 I bad hem strowe floures on my bed.
 Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hed,
 I fel a-slepe with-in an houre or two.
 Me mette how I was in the medew tho,
 And that I romed in that same gyse,
 To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse.
 Fair was this medew, as thoughte me overal;
 With floures swote enbrowded was it al;
 As for to speke of gomme, or erbe, or tree,
 Comparisoun may noon y-maked be.
 For hit surmounted pleyedly alle odoures,
 And eek of riche beaute alle floures.
 Forgeten had the erthe his pore estat
 Of winter, that him naked made and mat,
 And with his swerd of cold so sore had greved.
 Now had the atempre sonne al that releved,
 And clothed him in grene al newe agayn.
 The smale foules, of the seson fayn,
 That from the panter and the net ben scaped,
 Upon the fouler, that hem made a-whaped
 In winter, and distroyed had hir brood,
 In his despyt, hem thoughte hit did hem good
 To singe of him, and in hir song despyse
 The foule cherl that, for his covetyse,
 Had hem betrayed with his sophistrye.
 This was hir song—'the fouler we defye!'
 Somme songen [layes] on the braunches clere
 Of love and [May], that Ioye hit was to here,
 In worship and in preysing of hir make,
 And of the newe blisful someres sake,
 That songen, 'blissed be seynt Valentyn!
 [For] at his day I chees yow to be myn,
 With-oute repenting, myn herte swete!'
 And therwith-al hir bekes gonnen mete.
 [They dide honour and] humble obeisaunces,
 And after diden other observaunces
 Right [plesing] un-to love and to nature;
 So ech of hem [doth wel] to creature.
 This song to herkne I dide al myn entente,
 For-why I mette I wiste what they mente.
 And I had romed, al the someres day,
 Up-on the fresshe daysy to beholde.
 For trusteth wel, I ne have nat undertake
 As of the leef, ageyn the flour, to make;
 Ne of the flour to make, ageyn the leef,
 No more than of the corn ageyn the sheef.
 For, as to me, is leefe noon ne lother;
 I am with-holde yit with never nother.
 I not who serveth leef, ne who the flour;
 That nis nothing the entent of my labour.
 For this werk is al of another tunne,
 Of olde story, er swich stryf was begunne.

And that the sonne out of the south gan weste,
And closed was the flour and goon to reste
For derknesse of the night, of which she dredde,
Hoom to myn hous ful swiftly I me spedde
To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse.
And, in a litel erber that I have,
Y-benched newe with turves fresshe y-grave,
I bad men shulde me my couche make;
For deyntee of the newe someres sake,
I bad hem strowe floures on my bed.
Whan I was layd, and had myn eyen hed,
I fel a-slepe within an houre or two.
Me mette how I was in the medew tho,
Til at the laste a larke song above:
'I see,' quod she, 'the mighty god of love!
Lo! yond he cometh, I see his winges sprede!'
To seen that flour, as ye han herd devyse,
Tho gan I loken endelong the mede,
And saw him come, and in his hond a quene,
Clothed in ryal abite al of grene.
A fret of gold she hadde next hir heer,
And up-on that a whyt coroun she beer
With many floures, and I shal nat lye;
For al the world, right as the dayesye
I-coroned is with whyte leves lyte,
Swich were the floures of hir coroun whyte.
For of o perle fyn and oriental
Hir whyte coroun was y-maked al;
For which the whyte coroun, above the grene,
Made hir lyk a daysie for to sene,
Considered eek the fret of gold above.
Y-clothed was this mighty god of love
Of silk, y-brouded ful of grene greves;
A garlond on his heed of rose-leves
Steked al with lilie floures newe;
But of his face I can nat seyn the hewe.
For sekirly his face shoon so brighte,
That with the gleem a-stoned was the sighte;
A furlong-wey I mighte him nat beholde.
But at the laste in hande I saw him holde
Two fyry dartes, as the gledes rede;
And aungellich his wenges gan he sprede.
And al be that men seyn that blind is he,
Al-gate me thoughte he mighte wel y-see;
For sternely on me he gan biholde,
So that his loking doth myn herte colde.
And by the hande he held the noble quene,
Corouned with whyte, and clothed al in grene,
So womanly, so benigne, and so meke,
That in this world, thogh that men wolde seke,
Half hir beautee shulde men nat finde
In creature that formed is by kinde,
Hir name was Alceste the debonayre;
I prey to god that ever falle she fayre!
For ne hadde confort been of hir presence,

I had be deed, withouten any defence,
 For drede of Loves wordes and his chere,
 As, whan tyme is, her-after ye shal here.
 Byhind this god of love, up-on this grene,
 I saw cominge of ladyës nyntene
 In ryal abite, a ful esy pas,
 And after hem com of wemen swich a tras
 That, sin that god Adam made of erthe,
 The thredde part of wemen, ne the ferthe,
 Ne wende I nat by possibilitee
 Hadden ever in this world y-be;
 And trewe of love thise wemen were echoon.
 Now whether was that a wonder thing or noon,
 That, right anoon as that they gonne espye
 This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
 Ful sodeinly they stinten alle at-ones,
 And kneled adoun, as it were for the nones.
 And after that they wenten in compas,
 Daunsinge aboute this flour an esy pas,
 And songen, as it were in carole-wyse,
 This balade, which that I shal yow devyse.

Balade.

Hyd, Absolon, thy gilte tresses clere;
 Ester, ley them thy meknesse al a-doun;
 Hyd, Ionathas, al thy frendly manere;
 Penelopee, and Marcia Catoun,
 Mak of your wyfhod no comparisoun;
 Hyde ye your beautes, Isoude and Eleyne,
 Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.
 Thy faire body, lat hit nat appere,
 Lavyne; and thou, Lucesse of Rome toun,
 And Polixene, that boghte love so dere,
 Eek Cleopatre, with al thy passioun,
 Hyde ye your trouthe in love and your renoun;
 And thou, Tisbe, that hast for love swich peyne:
 Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.
 Herro, Dido, Laudomia, alle in-fere,
 Eek Phyllis, hanging for thy Demophoun,
 And Canace, espyed by thy chere,
 Ysiphile, betrayed with Jasoun,
 Mak of your trouthe in love no bost ne soun;
 Nor Ypermistre or Adriane, ne pleyne;
 Alceste is here, that al that may desteyne.
 Whan that this balade al y-songen was,
 Hir name was Alceste the debonayre;
 I prey to god that ever falle she fayre!
 For ne hadde confort been of hir presence,
 I had be deed, withouten any defence,
 For drede of Loves wordes and his chere,
 As, whan tyme is, her-after ye shal here.
 Byhind this god of love, up-on this grene,
 I saw cominge of ladyës nyntene
 In ryal abite, a ful esy pas,
 And after hem com of wemen swich a tras,
 That, sin that god Adam made of erthe,

The thredde part of wemen, ne the ferthe,
Ne wende I nat by possibilitee
Hadden ever in this world y-be.
And trewe of love these wemen were echoon.
Now whether was that a wonder thing or noon,
That, right anon as that they gonne espye
This flour, which that I clepe the dayesye,
Ful sodeinly they stinten alle atones,
And kneled adoun, as it were for the nones.
Upon the softe and swote grene gras
They setten hem ful softly adoun,
By ordre alle in compas, alle enveroun.
First sat the god of love, and than this quene
With the whyte coroun, clad in grene;
And sithen al the remenant by and by,
As they were of degree, ful curteisly;
Ne nat a word was spoken in the place
The mountance of a furlong-wey of space.
I, lening faste by under a bente,
Abood, to knowen what this peple mente,
As stille as any stoon; til at the laste,
The god of love on me his eye caste,
And seyde, 'who resteth ther?' and I answerde
Un-to his axing, whan that I him herde,
And seyde, 'sir, hit am I'; and cam him neer,
And salued him. Quod he, 'what dostow heer
In my presence, and that so boldely?
For it were better worthy, trewely,
A worm to comen in my sight than thou.'
'And why, sir,' quod I, 'and hit lyke yow?'
'For thou,' quod he, 'art ther-to nothing able.
My servaunts been alle wyse and honourable.
Thou art my mortal fo, and me warreyest,
And of myne olde servaunts thou misseyest,
And hinderest hem with thy translacioun,
And lettest folk to han devocioun
To serven me, and haldest hit folye
To troste on me. Thou mayst hit nat denyen;
For in pleyn text, hit nedeth nat to glose,
Thou hast translated the Romauns of the Rose,
That is an heresy ageyns my lawe,
And makest wyse folk fro me withdrawe.
And thinkest in thy wit, that is ful cool.
That he nis but a verray propre fool
That loveth paramours, to harde and hote.
Wel wot I ther-by thou beginnest dote
As olde foles, whan hir spirit fayleth;
Than blame they folk, and wite nat what hem ayleth.
Hast thou nat mad in English eek the book
How that Crisseyde Troilus forsook,
In shewing how that wemen han don mis?
But natheles, answer me now to this,
Why noldest thou as wel han seyde goodnesse
Of wemen, as thou hast seyde wikkednesse?
Was ther no good matere in thy minde,

Ne in alle thy bokes coudest thou nat finde
 Sum story of wemen that were goode and trewe?
 Yis! god wot, sixty bokes olde and newe
 Hast thou thy-self, alle fulle of stories grete,
 That bothe Romans and eek Grekes trete
 Of sundry wemen, which lyf that they ladde,
 And ever an hundred gode ageyn oon badde.
 This knoweth god, and alle clerkes eke,
 That usen swiche materes for to seke.
 What seith Valerie, Titus, or Claudian?
 What seith Ierome ageyns Iovinian?
 How clene maydens, and how trewe wyves,
 How stedfast widwes during al hir lyves,
 Telleth Jerome; and that nat of a fewe,
 But, I dar seyn, an hundred on a rewe;
 That hit is pitee for to rede, and routhe,
 The wo that they enduren for hir trouthe.
 For to hir love were they so trewe,
 That, rather than they wolde take a newe,
 They chosen to be dede in sundry wyse,
 And deyden, as the story wol devyse;
 And some were brend, and some were cut the hals,
 And some dreynt, for they wolden nat be fals.
 For alle keped they hir maydenhed,
 Or elles wedlok, or hir widwehed.
 And this thing was nat kept for holinesse,
 But al for verray vertu and clenness,
 And for men shulde sette on hem no lak;
 And yit they weren hethen, al the pak,
 That were so sore adrad of alle shame.
 These olde wemen kepte so hir name,
 That in this world I trow men shal nat finde
 A man that coude be so trewe and kinde,
 As was the leste woman in that tyde.
 What seith also the epistels of Ovyde
 Of trewe wyves, and of hir labour?
 What Vincent, in his Storial Mirour?
 Eek al the world of autours maystow here,
 Cristen and hethen, trete of swich matere;
 It nedeth nat alday thus for tendyte.
 But yit I sey, what eyleth thee to wryte
 The draf of stories, and forgo the corn?
 By seint Venus, of whom that I was born,
 Although [that] thou reneyed hast my lay,
 As othere olde foles many a day,
 Thou shalt repente hit, that hit shal be sene!
 Than spak Alceste, the worthieste quene,
 And seyde, 'god, right of your curtesye,
 Ye moten herknen if he can replye
 Ageyns these points that ye han to him meved;
 A god ne sholde nat be thus agreved,
 But of his deitee he shal be stable,
 And therto rightful and eek merciabe.
 He shal nat rightfully his yre wreke
 Or he have herd the tother party speke.

Al ne is nat gospel that is to yow pleyned;
The god of love herth many a tale y-feyned.
This man to yow may wrongly been accused,
Ther as by right him oghte been excused;
For in your court is many a losengeour,
And many a queynte totelere accusour,
That tabouren in your eres many a thing
For hate, or for Ielous imagining,
And for to han with yow som daliaunce.
Envye (I prey to god yeve hir mischaunce!)
Is lavender in the grete court alway.
For she ne parteth, neither night ne day,
Out of the hous of Cesar; thus seith Dante;
Who-so that goth, alwey she moot [nat] wante.
This man to yow may wrongly been accused,
Ther as by right him oghte been excused.
Or elles, sir, for that this man is nyce,
He may translate a thing in no malyce.
But for he useth bokes for to make,
And takth non heed of what matere he take;
Therfor he wroot the Rose and eek Crisseyde
Of innocence, and niste what he seyde;
Or him was boden make thilke tweye
Of som persone, and durste hit nat with-seye;
For he hath writen many a book er this.
He ne hath nat doon so grevously amis
To translaten that olde clerkes wryten,
As thogh that he of malice wolde endyten
Despyt of love, and hadde him-self y-wroght.
This shulde a rightwys lord han in his thought,
And nat be lyk tiraunts of Lumbardye,
That usen wilfulhed and tirannye,
For he that king or lord is naturel,
Him oghte nat be tiraunt ne cruel,
As is a fermour, to doon the harm he can.
He moste thinke hit is his lige man,
And that him oweth, of verray duetee,
Shewen his peple pleyn benigneitee,
And wel to here hir excusaciouns,
And hir compleyntes and peticiouns,
In duewe tyme, whan they shal hit profre.
This is the sentence of the philosophre:
A king to kepe his liges in Iustyce;
With-outen doute, that is his offyce.
And therto is a king ful depe y-sworn,
Ful many an hundred winter heer-biforn;
And for to kepe his lordes hir degree,
As hit is right and skilful that they be
Enhaunced and honoured, and most dere—
For they ben half-goddes in this world here—
This shal he doon, bothe to pore [and] riche,
Al be that here stat be nat a-liche,
And han of pore folk compassioun.
For lo, the gentil kind of the lioun!
For whan a flye offendeth him or byteth,

He with his tayl away the flye smyteth
 Al esily; for, of his genterye,
 Him deyneth nat to wreke him on a flye,
 As doth a curre or elles another beste.
 In noble corage oghte been areste,
 And weyen every thing by equitee,
 And ever han reward to his owen degree.
 For, sir, hit is no maystrie for a lord
 To dampne a man with-oute answee or word;
 And, for a lord, that is ful foul to use.
 And if so be he may him nat excuse,
 [But] axeth mercy with a sorweful herte,
 And profreth him, right in his bare sherte,
 To been right at your owne lugement,
 Than oghte a god, by short avyement,
 Considre his owne honour and his trespas.
 For sith no cause of deeth lyth in this cas,
 Yow oghte been the lighter merciable;
 Leteth your yre, and beth somewhat treftable!
 The man hath served yow of his conning,
 And forthered your lawe with his making.
 Whyl he was yong, he kepte your estat;
 I not wher he be now a renegat.
 But wel I wot, with that he can endyte,
 He hath maked lewed folk delyte
 To serve you, in preysing of your name.
 He made the book that hight the Hous of Fame,
 And eek the Deeth of Blaunche the Duchesse,
 And the Parlement of Foules, as I gesse,
 And al the love of Palamon and Arcyte
 Of Thebes, thogh the story is knowen lyte;
 And many an ympne for your halydayes,
 That highten Balades, Roundels, Virelayes;
 And for to speke of other besinesse,
 He hath in prose translated Boëce;
 And of the Wreched Engendring of Mankinde,
 As man may in pope Innocent y-finde;
 And mad the Lyf also of seynt Cecyle;
 He made also, goon sithen a greet whyl,
 Origenes upon the Maudeleyne;
 Him oghte now to have the lesse peyne;
 He hath mad many a lay and many a thing.
 'Now as ye been a god, and eek a king,
 I, your Alceste, whylom quene of Trace,
 I axe yow this man, right of your grace,
 That ye him never hurte in al his lyve;
 And he shal sweren yow, and that as blyve,
 He shal no more agilten in this wyse;
 But he shal maken, as ye wil devyse,
 Of wemen trewe in lovinge al hir lyve,
 Wher-so ye wil, of maiden or of wyve,
 And forthren yow, as muche as he misseyde
 Or in the Rose or elles in Crisseyde.'
 The god of love answerde hir thus anoon,
 'Madame,' quod he, 'hit is so long agoon

That I yow knew so charitable and trewe,
That never yit, sith that the world was newe,
To me ne fond I better noon than ye.
That, if that I wol save my degree,
I may ne wol nat warne your requeste;
Al lyth in yow, doth with him what yow leste
And al foryeve, with-uten lenger space;
For who-so yeveth a yift, or doth a grace,
Do hit by tyme, his thank is wel the more;
And demeth ye what he shal do therfore.
Go thanke now my lady heer,' quod he.
I roos, and doun I sette me on my knee,
And seyde thus: 'Madame, the god above
Foryelde yow, that ye the god of love
Han maked me his wrathe to foryive;
And yeve me grace so long for to live,
That I may knowe soothly what ye be
That han me holpen, and put in swich degree.
But trewely I wende, as in this cas,
Naught have agilt, ne doon to love trespas.
Forwhy a trewe man, with-uten drede,
Hath nat to parten with a theves dede;
Ne a trewe lover oghte me nat blame,
Thogh that I speke a fals lover som shame.
They oghte rather with me for to holde,
For that I of Creseyde wroot or tolde,
Or of the Rose; what-so myn auctour mente,
Algate, god wot, hit was myn entente
To forthren trouthe in love and hit cheryce;
And to be war fro falsnesse and fro vyce
By swich ensample; this was my meninge.'
And she answerde, 'lat be thyn arguinge;
For Love ne wol nat countrepleted be
In right ne wrong; and lerne this at me!
Thou hast thy grace, and hold thee right ther-to.
Now wol I seyn what penance thou shalt do
For thy trespas, and understond hit here:
Thou shalt, whyl that thou livest, yeer by yere,
The moste party of thy lyve spende
In making of a glorious Legende
Of Gode Wemen, maideness and wyves,
That were trewe in lovinge al hir lyves;
And telle of false men that hem bitrayen,
That al hir lyf ne doon nat but assayen
How many women they may doon a shame;
For in your world that is now holden game.
And thogh thee lesteth nat a lover be,
Spek wel of love; this penance yeve I thee.
And to the god of love I shal so preye,
That he shal charge his servants, by any weye,
To forthren thee, and wel thy labour quyte;
Go now thy wey, thy penance is but lyte.'
The god of love gan smyle, and than he seyde,
'Wostow,' quod he, 'wher this be wyf or mayde,
Or quene, or countesse, or of what degree,

That hath so litel penance yeven thee,
 That hast deserved sorer for to smerte?
 But pitee renneth sone in gentil herte;
 That mayst thou seen, she kytheth what she is.
 And I answerde, 'nay, sir, so have I blis,
 No more but that I see wel she is good.'
 'That is a trewe tale, by myn hood,'
 Quod Love, 'and that thou knowest wel, pardee,
 If hit be so that thou avyse thee.
 Hastow nat in a book, lyth in thy cheste,
 The grete goodnesse of the quene Alceste,
 That turned was into a dayesye:
 She that for hir husbonde chees to dye,
 And eek to goon to helle, rather than he,
 And Ercules rescued hir, pardee,
 And broghte hir out of helle agayn to blis?'
 And I answerde ageyn, and seyde, 'yis,
 Now knowe I hir! And is this good Alceste,
 The dayesye, and myn owne hertes reste?
 Now fele I wel the goodnesse of this wyf,
 That bothe after hir deeth, and in hir lyf,
 Hir grete bountee doubleth hir renoun!
 Wel hath she quit me myn affeccoun
 That I have to hir flour, the dayesye!
 No wonder is thogh Iove hir stellifye,
 As telleth Agaton, for hir goodnesse!
 Hir whyte coroun berth of hit witenesse;
 For also many vertues hadde she,
 As smale floures in hir coroun be.
 In remembraunce of hir and in honour,
 Cibella made the dayesy and the flour
 Y-coroned al with whyt, as men may see;
 And Mars yaf to hir coroun reed, pardee,
 In stede of rubies, set among the whyte.'
 Therwith this quene wex reed for shame a lyte,
 Whan she was preysed so in hir presence.
 Than seyde Love, 'a ful gret negligence
 Was hit to thee, to write unstedfastnesse
 Of women, sith thou knowest hir goodnesse
 By preef, and eek by stories heer-biforn;
 Let be the chaf, and wryt wel of the corn.
 Why noldest thou han writen of Alceste,
 And leten Criseide been a-slepe and reste?
 For of Alceste shulde thy wryting be,
 Sin that thou wost that kalender is she
 Of goodnesse, for she taughte of fyn lovinge,
 And namely of wyfhood the livinge,
 And alle the boundes that she oghte kepe;
 Thy litel wit was thilke tyme a-slepe.
 But now I charge thee, upon thy lyf,
 That in thy Legend thou make of this wyf,
 Whan thou hast othere smale mad before;
 And fare now wel, I charge thee no more.
 At Cleopatre I wol that thou beginne;
 And so forth; and my love so shalt thou winne.'

And with that word of sleep I gan a-awake,
 And right thus on my Legend gan I make.

Explicit prohemium.

I. THE LEGEND OF CLEOPATRA.

Incipit Legenda Cleopatrie, Martiris, Egipti regine.

After the deeth of Tholomee the king,
 That al Egipte hadde in his governing,
 Regned his quene Cleopataras;
 Til on a tyme befel ther swiche a cas,
 That out of Rome was sent a senatour,
 For to conqueren regnes and honour
 Unto the toun of Rome, as was usaunce,
 To have the world unto her obeisaunce;
 And, sooth to seye, Antonius was his name.
 So fil hit, as Fortune him oghte a shame
 Whan he was fallen in prosperitee,
 Rebel unto the toun of Rome is he.
 And over al this, the suster of Cesar,
 He lafte hir falsly, er that she was war,
 And wolde algates han another wyf;
 For whiche he took with Rome and Cesar stryf.
 Natheles, for-sooth, this ilke senatour
 Was a ful worthy gentil werreyour,
 And of his deeth hit was ful greet damage.
 But love had broght this man in swiche a rage,
 And him so narwe bounden in his las,
 Al for the love of Cleopataras,
 That al the world he sette at no value.
 Him thoughte, nas to him no thing so due
 As Cleopatras for to love and serve;
 Him roghte nat in armes for to sterve
 In the defence of hir, and of hir right.
 This noble quene eek lovede so this knight,
 Through his desert, and for his chivalrye;
 As certainly, but-if that bokes lye,
 He was, of persone and of gentillesse,
 And of discrecioun and hardinesse,
 Worthy to any wight that liven may.
 And she was fair as is the rose in May.
 And, for to maken shortly is the beste,
 She wex his wyf, and hadde him as hir leste.
 The wedding and the feste to devyse,
 To me, that have y-take swiche emprise
 Of so many a storie for to make,
 Hit were to long, lest that I sholde slake
 Of thing that bereth more effect and charge;
 For men may overlade a ship or barge;
 And forthy to theeffect than wol I skippe,
 And al the remenant, I wol lete hit slippe.
 Octovian, that wood was of this dede,
 Shoop him an ost on Antony to lede
 Al-outerly for his destruccioun,
 With stoute Romans, cruel as leoun;

To ship they wente, and thus I let hem saile.
 Antonius was war, and wol nat faile
 To meten with thise Romains, if he may;
 Took eek his reed, and bothe, upon a day,
 His wyf and he, and al his ost, forth wente
 To shippe anoon, no lenger they ne stente;
 And in the see hit happed hem to mete—
 Up goth the trompe—and for to shoute and shete,
 And peynen hem to sette on with the sonne.
 With grisly soun out goth the grete gonne,
 And heterly they hurtlen al at ones,
 And fro the top doun cometh the grete stones.
 In goth the grapenel so ful of crokes
 Among the ropes, and the shering-hokes.
 In with the polax presseth he and he;
 Behind the mast beginneth he to flee,
 And out agayn, and dryveth him over-borde;
 He stingeth him upon his speres orde;
 He rent the sail with hokes lyke a sythe;
 He bringeth the cuppe, and biddeth hem be blythe;
 He poureth pesen upon the hacches slider;
 With pottes ful of lym they goon to-gider;
 And thus the longe day in fight they spende
 Til, at the laste, as every thing hath ende,
 Antony is shent, and put him to the flighte,
 And al his folk to-go, that best go mighte.
 Fleeth eek the queen, with al her purple sail,
 For strokes, which that wente as thikke as hail;
 No wonder was, she mighte hit nat endure.
 And whan that Antony saw that aventure,
 'Allas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!
 My worshipe in this day thus have I lorn!
 And for dispeyr out of his witte he sterte,
 And roof him-self anoon through-out the herte
 Er that he ferther wente out of the place.
 His wyf, that coude of Cesar have no grace,
 To Egipte is fled, for drede and for distresse;
 But herkneth, ye that speke of kindenesse.
 Ye men, that falsly sweren many an ooth
 That ye wol dye, if that your love be wrooth,
 Heer may ye seen of women whiche a trouthe!
 This woful Cleopatre hath mad swich routhe
 That ther nis tonge noon that may hit telle.
 But on the morwe she wol no lenger dwelle,
 But made hir subtil werkmen make a shryne
 Of alle the rubies and the stones fyne
 In al Egipte that she coude espye;
 And putte ful the shryne of spycerye,
 And leet the cors embaume; and forth she fette
 This dede cors, and in the shryne hit shette.
 And next the shryne a pit than doth she grave;
 And alle the serpents that she mighte have,
 She putte hem in that grave, and thus she seyde:
 'Now love, to whom my sorweful herte obeyde
 So ferforthly that, fro that blisful houre

That I yow swor to been al frely youre,
 I mene yow, Antonius my knight!
 That never waking, in the day or night,
 Ye nere out of myn hertes remembraunce
 For wele or wo, for carole or for daunce;
 And in my-self this covenant made I tho,
 That, right swich as ye felten, wele or wo,
 As ferforth as hit in my power lay,
 Unreprovable unto my wyfhood ay,
 The same wolde I felen, lyf or deeth.
 And thilke covenant, whyl me lasteth breeth,
 I wol fulfille, and that shal wel be sene;
 Was never unto hir love a trewer quene.
 And with that word, naked, with ful good herte,
 Among the serpents in the pit she sterte,
 And ther she chees to han hir buryinge.
 Anoon the neddres gonne hir for to stinge,
 And she hir deeth receyveth, with good chere,
 For love of Antony, that was hir so dere:—
 And this is storial sooth, hit is no fable.
 Now, er I finde a man thus trewe and stable,
 And wol for love his deeth so freely take,
 I pray god lat our hedes never ake!
Explicit Legenda Cleopatrie, martiris.

II. THE LEGEND OF THISBE OF BABYLON.

Incipit Legenda Tesbe Babilonie, Martiris.

At Babiloine whylom fil it thus,
 The whiche toun the queen Semiramus
 Leet dichen al about, and walles make
 Ful hye, of harde tyles wel y-bake.
 Ther weren dwellinge in this noble toun
 Two lordes, which that were of greet renoun,
 And woneden so nigh, upon a grene,
 That ther nas but a stoon-wal hem bitwene,
 As ofte in grete tounes is the wone.
 And sooth to seyn, that o man hadde a sone,
 Of al that londe oon of the lustieste.
 That other hadde a doghter, the faireste,
 That estward in the world was tho dwellinge.
 The name of everich gan to other springe
 By wommen, that were neighebores aboute.
 For in that contree yit, withouten doute,
 Maidens been y-kept, for Ielosye,
 Ful streite, lest they diden som folye.
 This yonge man was cleped Piramus,
 And Tisbe hight the maid, Naso seith thus;
 And thus by report was hir name y-shove
 That, as they wexe in age, wex hir love;
 And certein, as by reson of hir age,
 Ther mighte have been bitwix hem mariage,
 But that hir fadres nolde hit nat assente;
 And bothe in love y-lyke sore they brente,
 That noon of alle hir frendes mighte hit lette

But prively somtyme yit they mette
 By sleighte, and speken som of hir desyr;
 As, wry the gleed, and hotter is the fyr;
 Forbede a love, and it is ten so wood.
 This wal, which that bitwix hem bothe stood,
 Was cloven a-two, right fro the toppe adoun,
 Of olde tyme of his fundacioun;
 But yit this clifte was so narwe and lyte,
 It as nat sene, dere y-nogh a myte.
 But what is that, that love can nat espye?
 Ye lovers two, if that I shal nat lye,
 Ye founden first this litel narwe clifte;
 And, with a soun as softe as any shrifte,
 They lete hir wordes through the clifte pace,
 And tolden, whyl that they stode in the place,
 Al hir compleynt of love, and al hir wo,
 At every tyme whan they dorste so.
 Upon that o syde of the wal stood he,
 And on that other syde stood Tisbe,
 The swote soun of other to receyve,
 And thus hir wardeins wolde they deceyve.
 And every day this wal they wolde threte,
 And wisshe to god, that it were doun y-bete.
 Thus wolde they seyn—'allas! thou wikked wal,
 Through thyn envye thou us lettest al!
 Why nilt thou cleve, or fallen al a-two?
 Or, at the leste, but thou woldest so,
 Yit woldestow but ones lete us mete,
 Or ones that we mighte kissen swete,
 Than were we covered of our cares colde.
 But natheles, yit be we to thee holde
 In as muche as thou suffrest for to goon
 Our wordes through thy lyme and eek thy stoon.
 Yit oghte we with thee ben wel apayd.'
 And whan thise ydel wordes weren sayd,
 The colde wal they wolden kisse of stoon,
 And take hir leve, and forth they wolden goon.
 And this was gladly in the even-tyde
 Or wonder erly, lest men hit espyde;
 And longe tyme they wroghte in this manere
 Til on a day, whan Phebus gan to clere,
 Aurora with the stremes of hir hete
 Had dried up the dew of herbes wete;
 Unto this clifte, as it was wont to be,
 Com Pyramus, and after com Tisbe,
 And plighen trouthe fully in hir fey
 That ilke same night to stele away,
 And to begyle hir wardeins everichoon,
 And forth out of the citee for to goon;
 And, for the feldes been so brode and wyde,
 For to mete in o place at o tyde,
 They sette mark hir meting sholde be
 Ther king Ninus was graven, under a tree;
 For olde payens that ydoles heried
 Useden tho in feldes to ben beried

And faste by this grave was a welle.
And, shortly of this tale for to telle,
This covenant was affermed wonder faste;
And longe hem thoughte that the sonne laste,
That hit nere goon under the see adoun.
This Tisbe hath so greet affeccoun
And so greet lyking Pirus to see,
That, whan she seigh her tyme mighte be,
At night she stal away ful prively
With her face y-wimpled subtilly;
For alle her frendes—for to save her trouthe—
She hath for-sake; alas! and that is routhe
That ever woman wolde be so trewe
To trusten man, but she the bet him knewe!
And to the tree she goth a ful good pas,
For love made her so hardy in this cas;
And by the welle adoun she gan her dresse.
Allas! than comth a wilde leonesse
Out of the wode, withouten more areste,
With bloody mouthe, of strangling of a beste,
To drinken of the welle, ther as she sat;
And, whan that Tisbe had espyed that,
She rist her up, with a ful drery herte,
And in a cave with dredful foot she sterte,
For by the mone she seigh hit wel with-alle.
And, as she ran, her wimpel leet she falle,
And took noon heed, so sore she was a-whaped.
And eek so glad of that she was escaped;
And thus she sit, and darketh wonder stille.
Whan that this leonesse hath dronke her fille,
About the welle gan she for to winde,
And right anon the wimpel gan she finde,
And with her bloody mouth hit al to-rente.
Whan this was doon, no lenger she ne stente,
But to the wode her wey than hath she nome.
And, at the laste, this Pirus is come,
But al to longe, alas! at hoom was he.
The mone shoon, men mighte wel y-see,
And in his weye, as that he com ful faste,
His eyen to the grounde adoun he caste,
And in the sonde, as he beheld adoun,
He seigh the steppes brode of a leoun,
And in his herte he sodeinly agroos,
And pale he wex, therwith his heer aroos,
And neer he com, and fond the wimpel torn.
'Allas!' quod he, 'the day that I was born!
This o night wol us lovers bothe slee!
How sholde I axen mercy of Tisbe
Whan I am he that have yow slain, alas!
My bidding hath yow slain, as in this cas.
Allas! to bidde a woman goon by nighte
In place ther as peril fallen mighte,
And I so slow! alas, I ne hadde be
Here in this place a furlong-wey or ye!
Now what leoun that be in this foreste,

My body mote he renden, or what beste
 That wilde is, gnawen mote he now myn herte!
 And with that worde he to the wimpel sterte,
 And kiste hit ofte, and weep on hit ful sore,
 And seide, 'wimpel, allas! ther nis no more
 But thou shalt fele as wel the blood of me
 As thou hast felt the bleding of Tisbe!'
 And with that worde he smoot him to the herte.
 The blood out of the wounde as brode sterte
 As water, whan the conduit broken is.
 Now Tisbe, which that wiste nat of this,
 But sitting in her drede, she thoghte thus,
 'If hit so falle that my Pirusus
 Be comen hider, and may me nat y-finde,
 He may me holden fals and eek unkinde.'
 And out she comth, and after him gan espyen
 Bothe with her herte and with her yën,
 And thoghte, 'I wol him tellen of my drede
 Bothe of the leonesse and al my dede.'
 And at the laste her love than hath she founde
 Beting with his heles on the grounde,
 Al bloody, and therwith-al a-bak she sterte,
 And lyke the waves quappe gan her herte,
 And pale as box she wex, and in a throwe
 Avysed her, and gan him wel to knowe,
 That hit was Pirusus, her herte dere.
 Who coude wryte whiche a deedly chere
 Hath Tisbe now, and how her heer she rente,
 And how she gan her-selve to turmente,
 And how she lyth and swowneth on the grounde,
 And how she weep of teres ful his wounde,
 How medeleth she his blood with her compleynte,
 And with his blood her-selven gan she peynte;
 How clippeth she the dede cors, allas?
 How doth this woful Tisbe in this cas!
 How kisseth she his frosty mouth so cold!
 'Who hath doon this, and who hath been so bold
 To sleen my leef? O speke, my Pirusus!
 I am thy Tisbe, that thee calleth thus!'
 And therwith-al she lifteth up his heed.
 This woful man, that was nat fully deed,
 Whan that he herde the name of Tisbe cryen,
 On her he caste his hevy deedly yën
 And doun again, and yeldeth up the gost.
 Tisbe rist up, withouten noise or bost,
 And seigh her wimpel and his empty shethe,
 And eek his swerd, that him hath doon to dethe;
 Than spak she thus: 'My woful hand,' quod she,
 'Is strong y-nogh in swiche a werk to me;
 For love shal yive me strengthe and hardinesse
 To make my wounde large y-nogh, I gesse.
 I wol thee folwen deed, and I wol be
 Felawe and cause eek of thy deeth,' quod she.
 'And thogh that nothing save the deeth only
 Mighte thee fro me departe trewely,

Thou shalt no more departe now fro me
 Than fro the deeth, for I wol go with thee!
 'And now, ye wrecched Ielous fadres oure,
 We, that weren whylom children youre,
 We prayen yow, withouten more envye,
 That in o grave y-fere we moten lye,
 Sin love hath brought us to this pitous ende!
 And rightwis god to every lover sende,
 That loveth trewely, more prosperitee
 Than ever hadde Piramus and Tisbe!
 And lat no gentil woman her assure
 To putten her in swiche an aventure.
 But god forbede but a woman can
 Been as trewe and loving as a man!
 And, for my part, I shal anon it kythe!
 And, with that worde, his swerd she took as swythe,
 That warm was of her loves blood and hoot,
 And to the herte she her-selven smoot.
 And thus ar Tisbe and Piramus ago.
 Of trewe men I finde but fewe mo
 In alle my bokes, save this Piramus,
 And therfor have I spoken of him thus.
 For hit is deyntee to us men to finde
 A man that can in love be trewe and kinde.
 Heer may ye seen, what lover so he be,
 A woman dar and can as wel as he.
Explicit legenda Tesbe.

III. THE LEGEND OF DIDO, QUEEN OF CARTHAGE.

Incipit Legenda Didonis martiris, Cartaginis regine.

Glory and honour, Virgil Mantuan,
 Be to thy name! and I shal, as I can,
 Folow thy lantern, as thou gost biforn,
 How Eneas to Dido was forsworn.
 In thyn Eneïd and Naso wol I take
 The tenour, and the grete effectes make.
 Whan Troye broght was to destruccioun
 By Grekes sleighte, and namely by Sinoun,
 Feyning the hors y-offred to Minerve,
 Through which that many a Troyan moste sterve;
 And Ector had, after his deeth, appered,
 And fyr so wood, it mighte nat be stered,
 In al the noble tour of Ilioun,
 That of the citee was the cheef dungeoun;
 And al the contree was so lowe y-broght,
 And Priamus the king fordoon and noght;
 And Eneas was charged by Venus
 To fleen away, he took Ascanius,
 That was his sone, in his right hand, and fledde;
 And on his bakke he bar and with him ledde
 His olde fader, cleped Anchises,
 And by the weye his wyf Creusa he lees.
 And mochel sorwe hadde he in his minde
 Er that he coude his felawshippe finde.

But, at the laste, whan he had hem founde,
 He made him redy in a certein stounde,
 And to the see ful faste he gan him hye,
 And saileth forth with al his companye
 Toward Itaile, as wolde destinee.
 But of his adventures in the see
 Nis nat to purpos for to speke of here,
 For hit acordeth nat to my matere.
 But, as I seide, of him and of Dido
 Shal be my tale, til that I have do.
 So longe he sailed in the salte see
 Til in Libye unnethe aryved he,
 With shippes seven and with no more navye;
 And glad was he to londe for to hye,
 So was he with the tempest al to-shake.
 And whan that he the haven had y-take,
 He had a knight, was called Achates;
 And him of al his felawshippe he chees
 To goon with him, the contre for tespye;
 He took with him no more companye.
 But forth they goon, and lafte his shippes ryde,
 His fere and he, with-outen any gyde.
 So longe he walketh in this wilderness
 Til, at the laste, he mette an hunteresse.
 A bowe in honde and arwes hadde she,
 Her clothes cutted were unto the knee;
 But she was yit the fairest creature
 That ever was y-formed by nature;
 And Eneas and Achates she grette,
 And thus she to hem spak, whan she hem mette.
 'Sawe ye,' quod she, 'as ye han walked wyde,
 Any of my sustren walke yow besyde,
 With any wilde boor or other beste
 That they han hunted to, in this foreste,
 Y-tukked up, with arwes in her cas?'
 'Nay, soothly, lady,' quod this Eneas;
 'But, by thy beaute, as hit thinketh me,
 Thou mightest never erthely womman be,
 But Phebus suster artow, as I gesse.
 And, if so be that thou be a goddessse,
 Have mercy on our labour and our wo.'
 'I nam no goddes, soothly,' quod she tho;
 'For maidens walken in this contree here,
 With arwes and with bowe, in this manere.
 This is the regne of Libie, ther ye been,
 Of which that Dido lady is and queen'—
 And shortly tolde him al the occasioun
 Why Dido com into that regioun,
 Of which as now me lusteth nat to ryme;
 Hit nedeth nat; hit nere but los of tyme.
 For this is al and som, it was Venus,
 His owne moder, that spak with him thus;
 And to Cartage she bad he sholde him dighte,
 And vanished anon out of his sighte.
 I coude folwe, word for word, Virgyle,

But it wolde lasten al to longe a whyle.
This noble queen, that cleped was Dido,
That whylom was the wyf of Sitheo,
That fairer was then is the brighte sonne,
This noble toun of Cartage hath begonne;
In which she regneth in so greet honour,
That she was holde of alle quenes flour,
Of gentillesse, of freedom, of beautee;
That wel was him that mighte her ones see;
Of kinges and of lordes so desyred,
That al the world her Beaute hadde y-fyred;
She stood so wel in every wightes grace.
Whan Eneas was come un-to that place,
Unto the maister-temple of al the toun
Ther Dido was in her devocioun,
Ful prively his wey than hath he nome.
Whan he was in the large temple come,
I can nat seyn if that hit be possible,
But Venus hadde him maked invisible—
Thus seith the book, with-outen any lees.
And whan this Eneas and Achates
Hadden in this temple been over-al,
Than founde they, depeynted on a wal,
How Troye and al the lond destroyed was.
'Allas! that I was born,' quod Eneas,
'Through-out the world our shame is kid so wyde,
Now it is peynted upon every syde!
We, that weren in prosperitee,
Be now disslaundred, and in swich degre,
No lenger for to liven I ne kepe!
And, with that worde, he brast out for to wepe
So tendrely, that routhe hit was to sene.
This fresshe lady, of the citee quene,
Stood in the temple, in her estat royal,
So richely, and eek so fair with-al,
So yong, so lusty, with her eyen glade,
That, if that god, that heven and erthe made,
Wolde han a love, for Beaute and goodnesse,
And womanhod, and trouthe, and seemlinesse,
Whom sholde he loven but this lady swete?
There nis no womman to him half so mete.
Fortune, that hath the world in governaunce,
Hath sodeinly broght in so newe a chaunce,
That never was ther yit so fremd a cas.
For al the companye of Eneas,
Which that he wende han loren in the see,
Aryved is, nat fer fro that citee;
For which, the grettest of his lordes some
By aventure ben to the citee come,
Unto that same temple, for to seke
The quene, and of her socour her beseke;
Swich renoun was ther spronge of her goodnesse.
And, whan they hadden told al hir distresse,
And al hir tempest and hir harde cas,
Unto the quene appered Eneas,

And openly beknew that hit was he.
 Who hadde Ioye than but his meynee,
 That hadden founde hir lord, hir governour?
 The quene saw they dide him swich honour,
 And had herd ofte of Eneas, er tho,
 And in her herte she hadde routhe and wo
 That ever swich a noble man as he
 Shal been disherited in swich degree;
 And saw the man, that he was lyk a knight,
 And suffisaunt of persone and of might,
 And lyk to been a veray gentil man;
 And wel his wordes he besette can,
 And had a noble visage for the nones,
 And formed wel of braunes and of bones.
 For, after Venus, hadde he swich fairnesse,
 That no man might be half so fair, I gesse.
 And wel a lord he semed for to be.
 And, for he was a straunger, somewhat she
 Lyked him the bet, as, god do bote,
 To som folk ofte newe thing is swote.
 Anoon her herte hath pitee of his wo,
 And, with that pitee, love com in also;
 And thus, for pitee and for gentillesse,
 Refresshed moste he been of his distresse.
 She seide, certes, that she sory was
 That he hath had swich peril and swich cas;
 And, in her frendly speche, in this manere
 She to him spak, and seide as ye may here.
 'Be ye nat Venus sone and Anchises?
 In good feith, al the worship and encrees
 That I may goodly doon yow, ye shul have.
 Your shippes and your meynee shal I save;
 And many a gentil word she spak him to;
 And comaunded her messengeres go
 The same day, with-oute any faile,
 His shippes for to seke, and hem vitaile.
 She many a beste to the shippes sente,
 And with the wyn she gan hem to presente;
 And to her royal paleys she her spedde,
 And Eneas alwey with her she ledde.
 What nedeth yow the feste to descryve?
 He never beter at ese was his lyve.
 Ful was the feste of deyntees and richesse,
 Of instruments, of song, and of gladnesse,
 And many an amorous loking and devys.
 This Eneas is come to Paradys
 Out of the swolow of helle, and thus in Ioye
 Remembreth him of his estat in Troye.
 To dauncing-chambres ful of parements,
 Of riche beddes, and of ornaments,
 This Eneas is lad, after the mete.
 And with the quene whan that he had sete,
 And spyces parted, and the wyn agoon,
 Unto his chambres was he lad anoon
 To take his ese and for to have his reste,

With al his folk, to doon what so hem leste.
Ther nas coursere wel y-brydled noon,
Ne stede, for the lusting wel to goon,
Ne large palfrey, esy for the nones,
Ne luwel, fretted ful of riche stones,
Ne sakkes ful of gold, of large wighte,
Ne ruby noon, that shynede by nighte,
Ne gentil hautein faucon heronere,
Ne hound, for hert or wilde boor or dere,
Ne coupe of gold, with florins newe y-bete,
That in the lond of Libie may be gete,
That Dido ne hath hit Eneas y-sent;
And al is payed, what that he hath spent.
Thus can this [noble] quene her gestes calle,
As she that can in freedom passen alle.
Eneas sothly eek, with-outen lees,
Hath sent un-to his shippe, by Achates,
After his sone, and after riche thinges,
Both ceptre, clothes, broches, and eek ringes,
Som for to were, and som for to presente
To her, that all thise noble thinges him sente;
And bad his sone, how that he sholde make
The presenting, and to the quene hit take.
Repaired is this Achates again,
And Eneas ful blisful is and fain
To seen his yonge sone Ascanius.
But natheles, our autour telleth us,
That Cupido, that is the god of love,
At preyere of his moder, hye above,
Hadde the lyknes of the child y-take,
This noble quene enamoured to make
On Eneas; but, as of that scripture,
Be as be may, I make of hit no cure.
But sooth is this, the quene hath mad swich chere
Un-to this child, that wonder is to here;
And of the present that his fader sente
She thanked him ful ofte, in good entente.
Thus is this quene in plesaunce and in Ioye,
With al this newe lusty folk of Troye.
And of the dedes hath she more enquired
Of Eneas, and al the story lered
Of Troye; and al the longe day they tweye
Entendeden to speken and to pleye;
Of which ther gan to bredden swich a fyr,
That sely Dido hath now swich desyr
With Eneas, her newe gest, to dele,
That she hath lost her hewe, and eek her hele.
Now to theeffect, now to the fruit of al,
Why I have told this story, and tellen shal.
Thus I beginne; hit fil, upon a night,
When that the mone up-reysed had her light,
This noble quene un-to her reste wente;
She syketh sore, and gan her-self turmente.
She waketh, walweth, maketh many a brayd,
As doon thise loveres, as I have herd sayd.

And at the laste, unto her suster Anne
 She made her moon, and right thus spak she thanne.
 'Now, dere suster myn, what may hit be
 That me agasteth in my dreme?' quod she.
 'This ilke Troyan is so in my thought,
 For that me thinketh he is so wel y-wroght,
 And eek so lykly for to be a man,
 And therewithal so mikel good he can,
 That al my love and lyf lyth in his cure.
 Have ye not herd him telle his aventure?
 Now certes, Anne, if that ye rede hit me,
 I wolde fain to him y-wedded be;
 This is theeffect; what sholde I more seye?
 In him lyth al, to do me live or deye.'
 Her suster Anne, as she that coude her good,
 Seide as her thoughte, and somdel hit with-stood.
 But her-of was so long a sermoning,
 Hit were to long to make rehersing;
 But fynally, hit may not been with-stonde;
 Love wol love—for no wight wol hit wonde.
 The dawening up-rist out of the see;
 This amorous quene chargeth her meynne
 The nettes dresse, and speres brode and kene;
 An hunting wol this lusty fresshe quene;
 So priketh her this newe Ioly wo.
 To hors is al her lusty folk y-go;
 Un-to the court the houndes been y-broght,
 And up-on coursers, swift as any thought,
 Her yonge knightes hoven al aboute,
 And of her wommen eek an huge route.
 Up-on a thikke palfrey, paper-whyte,
 With sadel rede, enbrouded with delyt,
 Of gold the barres up-enbossed hye,
 Sit Dido, al in gold and perle wrye;
 And she is fair, as is the brighte morwe,
 That heleth seke folk of nightes sorwe.
 Up-on a courser, startlyng as the fyr,
 Men mighte turne him with a litel wyr,
 Sit Eneas, lyk Phebus to devyse;
 So was he fresshe arayed in his wyse.
 The fomy brydel with the bit of gold
 Governeth he, right as him-self hath wold.
 And forth this noble quene thus lat I ryde
 An hunting, with this Troyan by her syde.
 The herd of hertes founden is anon,
 With 'hey! go bet! prik thou! lat goon, lat goon!
 Why nil the leoun comen or the bere,
 That I mighte ones mete him with this spere?'
 Thus seyn thise yonge folk, and up they kille
 These hertes wilde, and han hem at hir wille.
 Among al this to-romblen gan the heven,
 The thunder rored with a grisly steven;
 Doun com the rain, with hail and sleet so faste,
 With hevenes fyr, that hit so sore agaste
 This noble quene, and also her meynne,

That ech of hem was glad a-wey to flee.
And shortly, fro the tempest her to save,
She fledde her-self into a litel cave,
And with her wente this Eneas al-so;
I noot, with hem if ther wente any mo;
The autour maketh of hit no menciouun.
And heer began the depe affeccioun
Betwix hem two; this was the firste morwe
Of her gladnesse, and ginning of her sorwe.
For ther hath Eneas y-kneled so,
And told her al his herte, and al his wo,
And sworn so depe, to her to be trewe,
For wele or wo, and chaunge for no newe,
And as a fals lover so wel can pleyne,
That sely Dido rewed on his peyne,
And took him for husband, [to been] his wyf
For ever-mo, whyl that hem laste lyf.
And after this, whan that the tempest stente,
With mirth out as they comen, hoom they wente.
The wikked fame up roos, and that anon,
How Eneas hath with the quene y-gon
In-to the cave; and demed as hem liste;
And whan the king, that Yarbass hight, hit wiste,
As he that had her loved ever his lyf,
And wowed her, to have her to his wyf,
Swich sorwe as he hath maked, and swich chere,
Hit is a routhe and pitee for to here.
But, as in love, al-day hit happeth so,
That oon shal laughen at anothers wo;
Now laugheth Eneas, and is in loye
And more richesse than ever he was in Troye.
O sely womman, ful of innocence,
Ful of pitee, of trouthe, and conscience,
What maked yow to men to trusten so?
Have ye swich routhe upon hir feined wo,
And han swich olde ensamples yow beforn?
See ye nat alle, how they been for-sworn?
Wher see ye oon, that he ne hath laft his leef,
Or been unkinde, or doon her som mischeef,
Or pilled her, or bosted of his dede?
Ye may as wel hit seen, as ye may rede;
Tak heed now of this grete gentil-man,
This Troyan, that so wel her plesen can,
That feineth him so trewe and obeising,
So gentil and so privy of his doing,
And can so wel doon alle his obeisaunces,
And waiten her at festes and at daunces,
And when she goth to temple and hoom ageyn,
And fasten til he hath his lady seyn,
And bere in his devyses, for her sake,
Noot I nat what; and songes wolde he make,
Iusten, and doon of armes many thinges,
Sende her lettres, tokens, broches, ringes—
Now herkneth, how he shal his lady serve!
Ther-as he was in peril for to sterve

For hunger, and for mischief in the see,
 And desolat, and fled from his contree,
 And al his folk with tempest al to-driven,
 She hath her body and eek her reame yiven
 In-to his hond, ther-as she mighte have been
 Of other lond than of Cartage a queen,
 And lived in loye y-nogh; what wolde ye more?
 This Eneas, that hath so depe y-swore,
 Is wery of his craft with-in a throwe;
 The hote earnest is al over-blowe.
 And prively he doth his shippes dighte,
 And shapeth him to stele a-wey by nighte.
 This Dido hath suspeciou of this,
 And thoughte wel, that hit was al a-mis;
 For in his bedde he lyth a-night and syketh;
 She asketh him anon, what him mislyketh—
 'My dere herte, which that I love most?'
 'Certes,' quod he, 'this night my fadres gost
 Hath in my sleep so sore me tormented,
 And eek Mercurie his message hath presented,
 That nedes to the conquest of Itaile
 My destinee is sone for to saile;
 For which, me thinketh, brosten is myn herte!'
 Ther-with his false teres out they sterte;
 And taketh her with-in his armes two.
 'Is that in earnest,' quod she; 'wil ye so?
 Have ye nat sworn to wyve me to take,
 Alas! what womman wil ye of me make?
 I am a gentil-woman and a queen,
 Ye wil nat fro your wyf thus foule fleeen?
 That I was born! alas! what shal I do?'
 To telle in short, this noble queen Dido,
 She seketh halwes, and doth sacrifice;
 She kneleth, cryeth, that routhe is to devyse;
 Coniureth him, and profreth him to be
 His thral, his servant in the leste gree;
 She falleth him to fote, and swowneth there
 Dischevele, with her brighte gilte here,
 And seith, 'have mercy! let me with yow ryde!
 Thise lordes, which that wonen me besyde
 Wil me destroyen only for your sake.
 And, so ye wil me now to wyve take,
 As ye han sworn, than wol I yive yow leve
 To sleen me with your swerd now sone at eve!
 For than yit shal I dyen as your wyf.
 I am with childe, and yive my child his lyf.
 Mercy, lord! have pite in your thought!'
 But al this thing availeth her right noght;
 For on a night, slepinge, he let her lye,
 And stal a-wey un-to his companye,
 And, as a traitour, forth he gan to saile
 Toward the large contree of Itaile.
 Thus hath he laft Dido in wo and pyne;
 And wedded ther a lady hight Lavyne.
 A cloth he lafte, and eek his swerd standing,

Whan he fro Dido stal in her sleping,
 Right at her beddes heed, so gan he hye
 Whan that he stal a-wey to his navye;
 Which cloth, whan sely Dido gan awake,
 She hath hit kist ful ofte for his sake;
 And seide, 'O whyl Iupiter hit leste,
 Tak now my soule, unbind me of this unreste!
 I have fulfild of fortune al the cours.'
 And thus, allas! with-outen his socours,
 Twenty tyme y-swowned hath she thanne.
 And, whan that she un-to her suster Anne
 Compleyned had, of which I may nat wryte—
 So greet a routhe I have hit for tendyte—
 And bad her norice and her suster goon
 To fecchen fyr and other thing anoon,
 And seide, that she wolde sacrifye.
 And, whan she mighte her tyme wel espye,
 Up-on the fyr of sacrificys she sterte,
 And with his swerd she roof her to the herte.
 But, as myn autour seith, right thus she seyde;
 Or she was hurt, before that she deyde,
 She wroot a lettre anoon, that thus began:—
 'Right so,' quod she, 'as that the whyte swan
 Ayeins his deeth beginneth for to singe,
 Right so to yow make I my compleynge.
 Nat that I trowe to geten yow again,
 For wel I woot that it is al in vain,
 Sin that the goddes been contraire to me.
 But sin my name is lost through yow,' quod she,
 'I may wel lese a word on yow, or letter,
 Al-be-it that I shal be never the better;
 For thilke wind that blew your ship a-wey,
 The same wind hath blowe a-wey your fey:—
 But who wol al this letter have in minde,
 Rede Ovide, and in him he shal hit finde.
Explicit Legenda Didonis martiris, Cartaginis regine.

IV. THE LEGEND OF HYPsipYLE AND MEDEA.

Incipit Legenda Ysiphile et Medee, Martirum.

Part I. The Legend of Hypsipyle.

Thou rote of false lovers, duk Iasoun!
 Thou sly devourer and confusioun
 Of gentil-wommen, tender creatures,
 Thou madest thy reclaiming and thy lures
 To ladies of thy statly apparaunce,
 And of thy wordes, farced with plesaunce,
 And of thy feyned trouthe and thy manere,
 With thyn obeisaunce and thy humble chere,
 And with thy counterfeted peyne and wo.
 Ther other falsen oon, thou falsest two!
 O! ofte swore thou that thou woldest dye
 For love, whan thou ne feltest maladye
 Save foul delyt, which that thou callest love!
 If that I live, thy name shal be shove

In English, that thy sleighte shal be knowe!
 Have at thee, Iasoun! now thyn horn is blowe!
 But certes, hit is bothe routhe and wo
 That love with false loveres werketh so;
 For they shul have wel better love and chere
 Than he that hath aboght his love ful dere,
 Or had in armes many a bloody box.
 For ever as tendre a capoun et the fox,
 Thogh he be fals and hath the foul betrayed,
 As shal the good-man that ther-for hath payed.
 Al have he to the capoun skille and right,
 The false fox wol have his part at night.
 On Iasoun this ensample is wel y-sene
 By Isiphile and Medea the quene.
 In Tessalye, as Guido telleth us,
 Ther was a king that highte Pelleus,
 That had a brother, which that highte Eson;
 And, whan for age he mighte unnethes gon,
 He yaf to Pelleus the governing
 Of al his regne, and made him lord and king.
 Of which Eson this Iasoun geten was,
 That, in his tyme, in al that lond, ther nas
 Nat swich a famous knight of gentilesse,
 Of freedom, and of strengthe and lustinesse.
 After his fader deeth, he bar him so
 That ther nas noon that liste been his fo,
 But dide him al honour and companye;
 Of which this Pelleus hath greet envye,
 Imagining that Iasoun mighte be
 Enhaunsed so, and put in swich degree
 With love of lordes of his regioun,
 That from his regne he may be put adoun.
 And in his wit, a-night, compassed he
 How Iasoun mighte best destroyed be
 Withoute slaunder of his compasment.
 And at the laste he took avisement
 To senden him in-to som fer contree
 Ther as this Iasoun may destroyed be.
 This was his wit; al made he to Iasoun
 Gret chere of love and of affeccoun,
 For drede lest his lordes hit espyde.
 So fil hit so, as fame renneth wyde,
 Ther was swich tyding over-al and swich los,
 That in an yle that called was Colcos,
 Beyonde Troye, estward in the see,
 That ther-in was a ram, that men mighte see,
 That had a flees of gold, that shoon so brighte,
 That no-wher was ther swich an-other sighte;
 But hit was kept alway with a dragoun,
 And many othere merveils, up and doun,
 And with two boles, maked al of bras,
 That spitten fyr, and moche thing ther was.
 But this was eek the tale, nathelees,
 That who-so wolde winne thilke flees,
 He moste bothe, or he hit winne mighte,

With the boles and the dragoun fighte;
And king Oëtes lord was of that yle.
This Pelleus bethoghte upon this wyle;
That he his newew Iasoun wolde enhortē
To sailen to that lond, him to disporte,
And seide, 'Nevew, if hit mighte be
That swich a worship mighte fallen thee,
That thou this famous tresor mightest winne,
And bringen hit my regioun with-inne,
Hit were to me gret plesaunce and honour;
Than were I holde to quyte thy labour.
And al the cost I wol my-selven make;
And chees what folk that thou wilt with thee take;
Lat see now, darstow taken this viage?'
Iasoun was yong, and lusty of corage,
And under-took to doon this ilke emprise.
Anoon Argus his shippes gan devyse;
With Iasoun wente the stronge Ercules,
And many an-other that he with him chees.
But who-so axeth who is with him gon,
Lat him go reden Argonauticon,
For he wol telle a tale long y-now.
Philotetes anoon the sail up-drow,
Whan that the wind was good, and gan him hye
Out of his contree called Tessalye.
So long he sailed in the salte see
Til in the yle Lemnoun aryved he—
Al be this nat rehersed of Guido,
Yet seith Ovyde in his Epistles so—
And of this yle lady was and quene
The faire yonge Isiphilee, the shene,
That whylom Thoas doghter was, the king.
Isiphilee was goon in her playing;
And, roming on the clyves by the see,
Under a banke anoon espyed she
Wher that the ship of Iasoun gan aryve.
Of her goodnesse adoun she sendeth blyve
To witen yif that any straunge wight
With tempest thider were y-blowe a-night,
To doon him socour; as was her usaunce
To forthren every wight, and doon plesaunce
Of veray bountee and of curtesye.
This messagere adoun him gan to hye,
And fond Iasoun, and Ercules also,
That in a cogge to londe were y-go
Hem to refresshen and to take the eyr.
The morwening atempre was and fair;
And in his wey the messagere hem mette.
Ful cunningly thise lordes two he grette,
And dide his message, axing hem anoon
Yif they were broken, or oght wo begoon,
Or hadde nede of lodesmen or vitaile;
For of socour they shulde no-thing faile,
For hit was utterly the quenes wille.
Iasoun answerde, mekely and stille,

'My lady,' quod he, 'thanke I hertely
 Of hir goodnesse; us nedeth, trewely,
 No-thing as now, but that we wery be,
 And come for to pleye, out of the see,
 Til that the wind be better in our weye.'
 This lady rometh by the clif to pleye,
 With her meynne, endelong the stronde,
 And fynt this Iasoun and this other stonde,
 In spekinge of this thing, as I yow tolde.
 This Ercules and Iasoun gan beholde
 How that the quene hit was, and faire her grette
 Anon-right as they with this lady mette;
 And she took heed, and knew, by hir manere,
 By hir aray, by wordes and by chere,
 That hit were gentil-men, of greet degree.
 And to the castel with her ledeth she
 Thise straunge folk, and doth hem greet honour,
 And axeth hem of travail and labour
 That they han suffred in the salte see;
 So that, within a day, or two, or three,
 She knew, by folk that in his shippes be,
 That hit was Iasoun, ful of renomee,
 And Ercules, that had the grete los,
 That soghten the adventures of Colcos;
 And dide hem honour more then before,
 And with hem deled ever lenger the more,
 For they ben worthy folk, with-uten lees.
 And namely, most she spak with Ercules;
 To him her herte bar, he sholde be
 Sad, wys, and trewe, of wordes avisee,
 With-uten any other affeccoun
 Of love, or evil imaginacioun.
 This Ercules hath so this Iasoun preysed,
 That to the sonne he hath him up areysed,
 That half so trewe a man ther nas of love
 Under the cope of heven that is above;
 And he was wys, hardy, secree, and riche.—
 Of thise three pointes ther nas noon him liche;
 Of freedom passed he, and lustihede,
 Alle tho that liven or ben dede;
 Ther-to so greet a gentil-man was he,
 And of Tessalie lykly king to be.
 Ther nas no lak, but that he was agast
 To love, and for to speke shamefast.
 He hadde lever him-self to mordre, and dye
 Than that men shulde a lover him espye:—
 'As wolde almighty god that I had yive
 My blood and flesh, so that I mighte live,
 With the nones that he hadde o-wher a wyf
 For his estat; for swich a lusty lyf
 She sholde lede with this lusty knight!
 And al this was compassed on the night
 Betwixe him Iasoun and this Ercules.
 Of thise two heer was mad a shrewed lees
 To come to hous upon an innocent;

For to be-dote this queen was hir assent.
 And Iasoun is as coy as is a maide,
 He loketh pitously, but noght he saide,
 But frely yaf he to her conseileres
 Yiftes grete, and to her officeres.
 As wolde god I leiser hadde, and tyme,
 By proces al his wowing for to ryme.
 But in this hous if any fals lover be,
 Right as him-self now doth, right so dide he,
 With feyning and with every sotil dede.
 Ye gete no more of me, but ye wil rede
 Thoriginal, that telleth al the cas.
 The somme is this, that Iasoun wedded was
 Unto this quene, and took of her substaunce
 What-so him liste, unto his purveyaunce;
 And upon her begat he children two,
 And drow his sail, and saw her never-mo.
 A lettre sente she to him certain,
 Which were to long to wryten and to sein,
 And him repreveth of his grete untrouthe,
 And preyeth him on her to have som routhe.
 And of his children two, she seide him this,
 That they be lyke, of alle thing, y-wis,
 To Iasoun, save they coude nat begyle;
 And preyed god, or hit were longe whyle,
 That she, that had his herte y-raft her fro,
 Moste finden him to her untrewes al-so,
 And that she moste bothe her children spille,
 And alle tho that suffreth him his wille.
 And trew to Iasoun was she al her lyf,
 And ever kepte her chast, as for his wyf;
 Ne never had she Ioye at her herte,
 But dyed, for his love, of sorwes smerte.

Part II. The Legend of Medea.

To Colcos comen is this duk Iasoun,
 That is of love devourer and dragoun.
 As matere appetyteth forme al-wey,
 And from forme in-to forme hit passen may,
 Or as a welle that were botomlees,
 Right so can fals Iasoun have no pees.
 For, to desyren, through his appetyt,
 To doon with gentil wommen his delyt,
 This is his lust and his felicittee.
 Iasoun is romed forth to the citee,
 That whylom cleped was Iaconitos,
 That was the maister-toun of al Colcos,
 And hath y-told the cause of his coming
 Un-to Oëtes, of that contre king,
 Preying him that he moste doon his assay
 To gete the flees of gold, if that he may;
 Of which the king assenteth to his bone,
 And doth him honour, as hit is to done,
 So ferforth, that his doghter and his eyr,
 Medea, which that was so wys and fair

That fairer saw ther never man with yë,
 He made her doon to Iasoun companye
 At mete, and sitte by him in the halle.
 Now was Iasoun a semely man with-alle,
 And lyk a lord, and had a greet renoun,
 And of his loke as real as leoun,
 And goodly of his speche, and famulere,
 And coude of love al craft and art plenere
 With-oute boke, with everich observaunce.
 And, as fortune her oghte a foul meschaunce,
 She wex enamoured upon this man.
 'Iasoun,' quod she, 'for ought I see or can,
 As of this thing the which ye been aboute,
 Ye han your-self y-put in moche doute.
 For, who-so wol this aventure acheve,
 He may nat wel asterten, as I leve,
 With-uten deeth, but I his helpe be.
 But natheles, hit is my wille,' quod she,
 'To forthren yow, so that ye shal nat dye,
 But turnen, sound, hoom to your Tessalye.'
 'My righte lady,' quod this Iasoun tho,
 'That ye han of my dethe or of my wo
 Any reward, and doon me this honour,
 I wot wel that my might ne my labour
 May nat deserve hit in my lyves day;
 God thanke yow, ther I ne can ne may.
 Your man am I, and lowly you beseche,
 To been my help, with-oute more speche;
 But certes, for my deeth shal I nat spare.'
 Tho gan this Medea to him declare
 The peril of this cas, fro point to point,
 And of his batail, and in what disioint
 He mote stande, of which no creature,
 Save only she, ne mighte his lyf assure.
 And shortly, to the point right for to go,
 They been accorded ful, betwix hem two,
 That Iasoun shal her wedde, as trewe knight;
 And term y-set, to come sone at night
 Unto her chambre, and make ther his ooth,
 Upon the goddes, that he, for leef ne looth,
 Ne sholde her never falsen, night ne day,
 To been her husbond, whyl he liven may,
 As she that from his deeth him saved here.
 And her-upon, at night they mette y-fere,
 And doth his ooth, and goth with her to bedde.
 And on the morwe, upward he him spedde;
 For she hath taught him how he shal nat faile
 The flees to winne, and stinten his bataile;
 And saved him his lyf and his honour;
 And gat him greet name as a conquerour
 Right through the sleight of her enchantement.
 Now hath Iasoun the flees, and hoom is went
 With Medea, and tresor ful gret woon.
 But unwist of her fader is she goon
 To Tessaly, with duk Iasoun her leef,

That afterward hath broght her to mescheef.
 For as a traitour he is from her go,
 And with her lafte his yonge children two,
 And falsly hath betrayed her, allas!
 And ever in love a cheef traitour he was;
 And wedded yit the thridde wyf anon,
 That was the doghter of the king Creon.
 This is the meed of loving and guerdon
 That Medea received of Iasoun
 Right for her trouthe and for her kindenesse,
 That loved him better than her-self, I gesse,
 And lafte her fader and her heritage.
 And of Iasoun this is the vassalage,
 That, in his dayes, nas ther noon y-founde
 So fals a lover going on the grounde.
 And therfor in her lettre thus she seyde
 First, whan she of his falsnesse him umbreyde,
 'Why lyked me thy yelow heer to see
 More then the boundes of myn honestee,
 Why lyked me thy youthe and thy fairnesse,
 And of thy tonge the infinit graciousnesse?
 O, haddest thou in thy conquest deed y-be,
 Ful mikel untrouthe had ther dyed with thee!'
 Wel can Ovyde her lettre in vers endyte,
 Which were as now to long for me to wryte.
Explicit Legenda Ysiphile et Medee, Martirum.

V. THE LEGEND OF LUCRETIA.

Incipit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, martiris.

Now moot I seyn the exiling of kinges
 Of Rome, for hir horrible doinges,
 And of the laste king Tarquinius,
 As saith Ovyde and Titus Livius.
 But for that cause telle I nat this storie,
 But for to preise and drawen to memorie
 The verray wyf, the verray trewe Lucesse,
 That, for her wyfhood and her stedfastnesse,
 Nat only that thise payens her comende,
 But he, that cleped is in our legende
 The grete Austin, hath greet compassioun
 Of this Lucesse, that starf at Rome toun;
 And in what wyse, I wol but shortly trete,
 And of this thing I touche but the grete.
 Whan Ardea beseged was aboute
 With Romans, that ful sterne were and stoute,
 Ful longe lay the sege, and litel wroghte,
 So that they were half ydel, as hem thoghte;
 And in his pley Tarquinius the yonge
 Gan for to iape, for he was light of tonge,
 And seyde, that 'it was an ydel lyf;
 No man did ther no more than his wyf;
 And lat us speke of wyves, that is best;
 Praise every man his owne, as him lest,
 And with our speche lat us ese our herte.'

A knight, that highte Colatyne, up sterte,
 And seyde thus, 'nay, for hit is no nede
 To trowen on the word, but on the dede.
 I have a wyf,' quod he, 'that, as I trowe,
 Is holden good of alle that ever her knowe;
 Go we to-night to Rome, and we shul see.'
 Tarquinius answerde, 'that lyketh me.'
 To Rome be they come, and faste hem dighte
 To Colatynes hous, and doun they lighte,
 Tarquinius, and eek this Colatyne.
 The husbond knew the estres wel and fyne,
 And prively into the hous they goon;
 Nor at the gate porter was ther noon;
 And at the chambre-dore they abyde.
 This noble wyf sat by her beddes syde
 Dischevele, for no malice she ne thoghte;
 And softe wolde our book seith that she wroghte
 To kepen her fro slouthe and ydelnesse;
 And bad her servants doon hir businesse,
 And axeth hem, 'what tydings heren ye?
 How seith men of the sege, how shal hit be?
 God wolde the walles weren falle adoun;
 Myn husbond is so longe out of this toun,
 For which the dreed doth me so sore smerte,
 Right as a swerd hit stingeth to myn herte
 Whan I think on the sege or of that place;
 God save my lord, I preye him for his grace:'—
 And ther-with-al ful tenderly she weep,
 And of her werk she took no more keep,
 But mekely she leet her eyen falle;
 And thilke semblant sat her wel with-alle.
 And eek her teres, ful of honestee,
 Embelissed her wyfly chastitee;
 Her countenaunce is to her herte digne,
 For they acordeden in dede and signe.
 And with that word her husbond Colatyn,
 Or she of him was war, com sterting in,
 And seide, 'dreed thee noght, for I am here!
 And she anon up roos, with blisful chere,
 And kiste him, as of wyves is the wone.
 Tarquinius, this proude kinges sone,
 Conceived hath her beautee and her chere,
 Her yelow heer, her shap, and her manere,
 Her hew, her wordes that she hath compleyned,
 And by no crafte her beautee nas nat feyned;
 And caughte to this lady swich desyr,
 That in his herte brende as any fyr
 So woodly, that his wit was al forgeten.
 For wel, thoghte he, she sholde nat be geten
 And ay the more that he was in dispair,
 The more he coveteth and thoghte her fair.
 His blinde lust was al his covetinge.
 A-morwe, whan the brid began to singe,
 Unto the sege he comth ful privily,
 And by himself he walketh sobrelly,

Thimage of her recording alwey newe;
'Thus lay her heer, and thus fresh was her hewe;
Thus sat, thus spak, thus span; this was her chere,
Thus fair she was, and this was her manere.'
Al this conceit his herte hath now y-take.
And, as the see, with tempest al to-shake,
That, after whan the storm is al ago,
Yet wol the water quappe a day or two,
Right so, though that her forme wer absent,
The plesaunce of her forme was present;
But natheles, nat plesaunce, but delyt,
Or an unrightful talent with despyt;
'For, maugre her, she shal my lemman be;
Hap helpeth hardy man alday,' quod he;
'What ende that I make, hit shal be so;'
And girt him with his swerde, and gan to go;
And forth he rit til he to Rome is come,
And al aloon his wey than hath he nome
Unto the house of Colatyn ful right.
Doun was the sonne, and day hath lost his light;
And in he com un-to a privy halke,
And in the night ful theefly gan he stalke,
Whan every night was to his reste broght,
Ne no wight had of tresoun swich a thocht.
Were hit by window or by other gin,
With swerde y-drawe, shortly he comth in
Ther as she lay, this noble wyf Lucesse.
And, as she wook, her bed she felte presse.
'What beste is that,' quod she, 'that weyeth thus?'
'I am the kinges sone, Tarquinius,'
Quod he, 'but and thou crye, or noise make,
Or if thou any creature awake,
By thilke god that formed man on lyve,
This swerd through-out thyn herte shal I ryve.'
And ther-withal unto her throte he sterte,
And sette the point al sharp upon her herte.
No word she spak, she hath no might therto.
What shal she sayn? her wit is al ago.
Right as a wolf that fynt a lomb aloon,
To whom shal she compleyne, or make moon?
What! shal she fighte with an hardy knight?
Wel wot men that a woman hath no might.
What! shal she crye, or how shal she asterte
That hath her by the throte, with swerde at herte?
She axeth grace, and seith al that she can.
'Ne wolt thou nat,' quod he, this cruel man,
'As wisly Iupiter my soule save,
As I shal in the stable slee thy knave,
And leye him in thy bed, and loude crye,
That I thee finde in suche avouterye;
And thus thou shalt be deed, and also lese
Thy name, for thou shalt non other chese.'
Thise Romain wyves loveden so hir name
At thilke tyme, and dredden so the shame,
That, what for fere of slaundre and drede of deeth,

She loste bothe at-ones wit and breeth,
 And in a swough she lay and wex so deed,
 Men mighte smyten of her arm or heed;
 She feleth no-thing, neither foul ne fair.
 Tarquinius, that art a kinges eyr,
 And sholdest, as by linage and by right,
 Doon as a lord and as a verray knight,
 Why hastow doon dispyt to chivalrye?
 Why hastow doon this lady vilanye?
 Allas! of thee this was a vileins dede!
 But now to purpos; in the story I rede,
 Whan he was goon, al this mischaunce is falle.
 This lady sente after her frendes alle,
 Fader, moder, husbond, al y-fere;
 And al dischevele, with her heres clere,
 In habit swich as women used tho
 Unto the burying of her frendes go,
 She sit in halle with a sorweful sighte.
 Her frendes axen what her aylen mighte,
 And who was deed? And she sit ay wepinge,
 A word for shame ne may she forth out-bringe,
 Ne upon hem she dorste nat beholde.
 But atte laste of Tarquiny she hem tolde,
 This rewful cas, and al this thing horrible.
 The wo to tellen hit were impossible,
 That she and alle her frendes made atones.
 Al hadde folkes hertes been of stones,
 Hit mighte have maked hem upon her rewe,
 Her herte was so wyfly and so trewe.
 She seide, that, for her gilt ne for her blame,
 Her husbond sholde nat have the foule name,
 That wolde she nat suffre, by no wey.
 And they answerden alle, upon hir fey,
 That they foryeve hit her, for hit was right;
 Hit was no gilt, hit lay nat in her might;
 And seiden her ensamples many oon.
 But al for noght; for thus she seide anoon,
 'Be as be may,' quod she, 'of forgiving,
 I wol nat have no forgift for no-thing.'
 But prively she caughte forth a knyf,
 And therwith-al she rafte her-self her lyf;
 And as she fel adoun, she caste her look,
 And of her clothes yit she hede took;
 For in her falling yit she hadde care
 Lest that her feet or swiche thing lay bare;
 So wel she loved clenness and eek trouthe.
 Of her had al the toun of Rome routhe,
 And Brutus by her chaste blode hath swore
 That Tarquin sholde y-banisht be ther-fore,
 And al his kin; and let the peple calle,
 And openly the tale he tolde hem alle,
 And openly let carie her on a bere
 Through al the toun, that men may see and here
 The horrible deed of her oppressioun.
 Ne never was ther king in Rome toun

Sin thilke day; and she was holden there
 A seint, and ever her day y-halwed dere
 As in hir lawe: and thus endeth Lucesse,
 The noble wyf, as Titus bereth witesse.
 I tell hit, for she was of love so trewe,
 Ne in her wille she chaunged for no newe.
 And for the stable herte, sad and kinde,
 That in these women men may alday finde;
 Ther as they caste hir herte, ther hit dwelleth.
 For wel I wot, that Crist him-selve telleth,
 That in Israel, as wyd as is the lond,
 That so gret feith in al the lond he ne fond
 As in a woman; and this is no lye.
 And as of men, loketh which tirannye
 They doon alday; assay hem who so liste,
 The trewest is ful brotel for to triste.
Explicit Legenda Lucrecie Rome, Martiris.

VI. THE LEGEND OF ARIADNE.

Incipit Legenda Adriane de Athenes.

Iuge infernal, Minos, of Crete king,
 Now cometh thy lot, now comestow on the ring;
 Nat for thy sake only wryte I this storie,
 But for to clepe agein unto memorie
 Of Theseus the grete untrouthe of love;
 For which the goddes of the heven above
 Ben wrothe, and wreche han take for thy sinne.
 Be reed for shame! now I thy lyf beginne.
 Minos, that was the mighty king of Crete,
 That hadde an hundred citees stronge and grete,
 To scole hath sent his sone Androgeus,
 To Athenes; of the whiche hit happed thus,
 That he was slayn, lerning philosophye,
 Right in that citee, nat but for envye.
 The grete Minos, of the whiche I speke,
 His sones deeth is comen for to wreke;
 Alcatheo he bisegeth harde and longe.
 But natheles the walles be so stronge,
 And Nisus, that was king of that citee,
 So chivalrous, that litel dredeth he;
 Of Minos or his ost took he no cure,
 Til on a day befel an aventure,
 That Nisus doghter stood upon the wal,
 And of the sege saw the maner al.
 So happed hit, that, at a scarmishing,
 She caste her herte upon Minos the king,
 For his beautee and for his chivalrye,
 So sore, that she wende for to dye.
 And, shortly of this proces for to pace,
 She made Minos winnen thilke place,
 So that the citee was al at his wille,
 To saven whom him list, or elles spille;
 But wikkedly he quitte her kindenesse,
 And let her drenche in sorowe and distresse,

Nere that the goddes hadde of her pite;
 But that tale were to long as now for me.
 Athenes wan this king Minos also,
 And Alcathe and other tounes mo;
 And this theeffect, that Minos hath so driven
 Hem of Athenes, that they mote him yiven
 Fro yere to yere her owne children dere
 For to be slayn, as ye shul after here.
 This Minos hath a monstre, a wikked beste,
 That was so cruel that, without areste,
 Whan that a man was broght in his presence,
 He wolde him ete, ther helpeth no defence.
 And every thridde yeer, with-oute doute,
 They casten lot, and, as hit com aboute
 On riche, on pore, he moste his sone take,
 And of his child he moste present make
 Unto Minos, to save him or to spille,
 Or lete his beste devoure him at his wille.
 And this hath Minos don, right in despyt;
 To wreke his sone was set al his delyt,
 And maken hem of Athenes his thral
 Fro yere to yere, whyl that he liven shal;
 And hoom he saileth whan this toun is wonne.
 This wikked custom is so longe y-ronne
 Til that of Athenes king Egeus
 Mot sende his owne sone, Theseus,
 Sith that the lot is fallen him upon,
 To be devoured, for grace is ther non.
 And forth is lad this woful yonge knight
 Unto the court of king Minos ful right,
 And in a prison, fettered, cast is he
 Til thilke tyme he sholde y-freten be.
 Wel maystow wepe, O woful Theseus,
 That art a kinges sone, and dampned thus.
 Me thinketh this, that thou were depe y-holde
 To whom that saved thee fro cares colde!
 And now, if any woman helpe thee,
 Wel oughtestow her servant for to be,
 And been her trewe lover yeer by yere!
 But now to come ageyn to my matere.
 The tour, ther as this Theseus is throwe
 Doun in the botom derke and wonder lowe,
 Was ioyning in the walle to a foreyne;
 And hit was longing to the doghtren tweyne
 Of king Minos, that in hir chambres grete
 Dwelten above, toward the maister-strete,
 In mochel mirthe, in loye and in solas.
 Not I nat how, hit happed ther, per cas,
 As Theseus compleyned him by nighte,
 The kinges doghter, Adrian that highte,
 And eek her suster Phedra, herden al
 His compleyning, as they stode on the wal
 And lokeden upon the brighte mone;
 Hem leste nat to go to bedde sone.
 And of his wo they had compassioun;

A kinges sone to ben in swich prisoun
And be devoured, thoughte hem gret pitee.
Than Adrian spak to her suster free,
And seyde, 'Phedra, leve suster dere,
This woful lordes sone may ye nat here,
How pitously compleyneth he his kin,
And eek his pore estat that he is in,
And gilteless? now certes, hit is routhe!
And if ye wol assenten, by my trouthe,
He shal be holpen, how so that we do!'
Phedra answerde, 'y-wis, me is as wo
For him as ever I was for any man;
And, to his help, the beste reed I can
Is that we doon the gayler prively
To come, and speke with us hastily,
And doon this woful man with him to come.
For if he may this monstre overcome,
Than were he quit; ther is noon other bote.
Lat us wel taste him at his herte-rote,
That, if so be that he a wepen have,
Wher that he dar, his lyf to kepe and save,
Fighten with this fend, and him defende.
For, in the prison, ther he shal descende,
Ye wite wel, that the beste is in a place
That nis nat derk, and hath roum eek and space
To welde an ax or swerd or staf or knyf,
So that, me thinketh, he sholde save his lyf;
If that he be a man, he shal do so.
And we shul make him balles eek also
Of wexe and towe, that, whan he gapeth faste,
Into the bestes throte he shal hem caste
To slake his hunger and encombre his teeth;
And right anon, whan that Theseus seeth
The beste achoked, he shal on him lepe
To sleen him, or they comen more to-hepe.
This wepen shal the gayler, or that tyde,
Ful privily within the prison hyde;
And, for the hous is crinkled to and fro,
And hath so queinte weyes for to go—
For hit is shapen as the mase is wroght—
Therto have I a remedie in my thought,
That, by a clewe of twyne, as he hath goon,
The same wey he may returne anon,
Folwing alwey the threed, as he hath come.
And, whan that he this beste hath overcome,
Then may he fleen away out of this drede,
And eek the gayler may he with him lede,
And him avaunce at hoom in his contree,
Sin that so greet a lordes sone is he.
This is my reed, if that he dar hit take.'
What sholde I lenger sermoun of hit make?
The gayler cometh, and with him Theseus.
And whan thise things been acorded thus,
Adoun sit Theseus upon his knee:—
'The righte lady of my lyf,' quod he,

'I, sorweful man, y-dampned to the deeth,
 Fro yow, whyl that me lasteth lyf or breeth,
 I wol nat twinne, after this aventure,
 But in your servise thus I wol endure,
 That, as a wrecche unknowe, I wol yow serve
 For ever-mo, til that myn herte sterve.
 Forsake I wol at hoom myn heritage,
 And, as I seide, ben of your court a page,
 If that ye vouche-sauf that, in this place,
 Ye graunte me to han so gret a grace
 That I may han nat but my mete and drinke;
 And for my sustenance yit wol I swinke,
 Right as yow list, that Minos ne no wight—
 Sin that he saw me never with eyen sight—
 Ne no man elles, shal me conne espye;
 So slyly and so wel I shal me gye,
 And me so wel disfigure and so lowe,
 That in this world ther shal no man me knowe,
 To han my lyf, and for to han presence
 Of yow, that doon to me this excellence.
 And to my fader shal I senden here
 This worthy man, that is now your gaylere,
 And, him to guerdon, that he shal wel be
 Oon of the grettest men of my contree.
 And yif I dorste seyn, my lady bright,
 I am a kinges sone, and eek a knight;
 As wolde god, yif that hit mighte be
 Ye weren in my contree, alle three,
 And I with yow, to bere yow companye,
 Than shulde ye seen yif that I ther-of lye!
 And, if I profre yow in low manere
 To ben your page and serven yow right here,
 But I yow serve as lowly in that place,
 I prey to Mars to yive me swiche a grace
 That shames deeth on me ther mote falle,
 And deeth and povert to my frendes alle;
 And that my spirit by nighte mote go
 After my deeth, and walke to and fro;
 That I mote of a traitour have a name,
 For which my spirit go, to do me shame!
 And yif I ever claime other degree,
 But-if ye vouche-sauf to yive hit me,
 As I have seid, of shames deeth I deye!
 And mercy, lady! I can nat elles seye!
 A seemly knight was Theseus to see,
 And yong, but of a twenty yeer and three;
 But who-so hadde y-seyn his countenance,
 He wolde have wept, for routhe of his penaunce;
 For which this Adriane in this manere
 Answerde to his profre and to his chere.
 'A kinges sone, and eek a knight,' quod she,
 'To been my servant in so low degree,
 God shilde hit, for the shame of women alle!
 And me never swich a cas befalle!
 But sende yow grace and sleighte of herte also,

Yow to defende and knightly sleen your fo,
And leve hereafter that I may yow finde
To me and to my suster here so kinde,
That I repente nat to give yow lyf!
Yit were hit better that I were your wyf,
Sin that ye been as gentil born as I,
And have a rëaume, nat but faste by,
Then that I suffred giltles yow to sterve,
Or that I let yow as a page serve;
Hit is not profit, as unto your kinrede;
But what is that that man nil do for drede?
And to my suster, sin that hit is so
That she mot goon with me, if that I go,
Or elles suffre deeth as wel as I,
That ye unto your sone as trewely
Doon her be wedded at your hoom-coming.
This is the fynal ende of al this thing;
Ye swere hit heer, on al that may be sworn.
'Ye, lady myn,' quod he, 'or elles torn
Mote I be with the Minotaur to-morwe!
And haveth her-of my herte-blood to borwe,
Yif that ye wile; if I had knyf or spere,
I wolde hit leten out, and ther-on swere,
For than at erst I wot ye wil me leve.
By Mars, that is the cheef of my bileve,
So that I mighte liven and nat faile
To-morwe for tacheve my bataile,
I nolde never fro this place flee,
Til that ye shuld the verray preve see.
For now, if that the sooth I shal yow say,
I have y-loved yow ful many a day,
Thogh ye ne wiste hit nat, in my contree.
And aldermost desyred yow to see
Of any erthly living creature;
Upon my trouthe I swere, and yow assure,
Thise seven yeer I have your servant be;
Now have I yow, and also have ye me,
My dere herte, of Athenes duchesse!'
This lady smyleth at his stedfastnesse,
And at his hertly wordes, and his chere,
And to her suster seide in this manere,
Al softly, 'now, suster myn,' quod she,
'Now be we duchesses, bothe I and ye,
And sikered to the regals of Athenes,
And bothe her-after lykly to be quenes,
And saved fro his deeth a kinges sone,
As ever of gentil women is the wone
To save a gentil man, emforth hir might,
In honest cause, and namely in his right.
Me thinketh no wight oghte her-of us blame,
Ne beren us ther-for an evel name.'
And shortly of this matere for to make,
This Theseus of her hath leve y-take,
And every point performed was in dede
As ye have in this covenant herd me rede.

His wepen, his clew, his thing that I have said,
 Was by the gayler in the hous y-laid
 Ther as this Minotaur hath his dwelling,
 Right faste by the dore, at his entring.
 And Theseus is lad unto his deeth,
 And forth un-to this Minotaur he geeth,
 And by the teching of this Adriane
 He overcom this beste, and was his bane;
 And out he cometh by the clewe again
 Ful prevely, whan he this beste hath slain;
 And by the gayler geten hath a barge,
 And of his wyves tresor gan hit charge,
 And took his wyf, and eek her suster free,
 And eek the gayler, and with hem alle three
 Is stole away out of the lond by nighte,
 And to the contre of Ennopye him dighte
 Ther as he had a frend of his knowinge.
 Ther festen they, ther dauncen they and singe;
 And in his armes hath this Adriane,
 That of the beste hath kept him from his bane;
 And gat him ther a newe barge anoon,
 And of his contree-folk a ful gret woon,
 And taketh his leve, and hoomward saileth he.
 And in an yle, amid the wilde see,
 Ther as ther dwelte creature noon
 Save wilde bestes, and that ful many oon,
 He made his ship a-londe for to sette;
 And in that yle half a day he lette,
 And seide, that on the lond he moste him reste.
 His mariners han doon right as him leste;
 And, for to tellen shortly in this cas,
 Whan Adriane his wyf a-slepe was,
 For that her suster fairer was than she,
 He taketh her in his hond, and forth goth he
 To shippe, and as a traitour stal his way
 Whyl that this Adriane a-slepe lay,
 And to his contree-ward he saileth blyve—
 A twenty devil way the wind him dryve!—
 And fond his fader drenched in the see.
 Me list no more to speke of him, parde;
 Thise false lovers, poison be hir bane!
 But I wol turne again to Adriane
 That is with slepe for werinesse atake.
 Ful sorwefully her herte may awake.
 Allas! for thee my herte hath now pite!
 Right in the dawening awaketh she,
 And gropeth in the bedde, and fond right noght.
 'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was wrought!
 I am betrayed!' and her heer to-rente,
 And to the stronde bar-fot faste she wente,
 And cryed, 'Theseus! myn herte swete!
 Wher be ye, that I may nat with yow mete,
 And mighte thus with bestes been y-slain?'
 The holwe rokkes answerde her again;
 No man she saw, and yit shyned the mone,

And hye upon a rokke she wente sone,
 And saw his barge sailing in the see.
 Cold wex her herte, and right thus seide she.
 'Meker than ye finde I the bestes wilde!'

Hadde he nat sinne, that her thus begylde?
 She cryed, 'O turne again, for routhe and sinne!
 Thy barge hath nat al his meiny inne!'

Her kerchef on a pole up stikked she,
 Ascaunce that he sholde hit wel y-see,
 And him remembre that she was behinde,
 And turne again, and on the stronde her finde;
 But al for noght; his wey he is y-goon.
 And doun she fil a-swown upon a stoon;
 And up she rist, and kiste, in al her care,
 The steppes of his feet, ther he hath fare,
 And to her bedde right thus she speketh tho:—
 'Thou bed,' quod she, 'that hast receyved two,
 Thou shalt answeere of two, and nat of oon!
 Wher is thy gretter part away y-goon?
 Allas! wher shal I, wrecched wight, become!
 For, though so be that ship or boot heer come,
 Hoom to my contree dar I nat for drede;
 I can my-selven in this cas nat rede!'

What shal I telle more her compleining?
 Hit is so long, hit were an hevy thing.
 In her epistle Naso telleth al;
 But shortly to the ende I telle shal.
 The goddes have her holpen, for pitee;
 And, in the signe of Taurus, men may see
 The stones of her coroun shyne clere.—
 I wol no more speke of this matere;
 But thus this false lover can begyle
 His trewe love. The devil quyte him his whyle!

Explicit Legenda Adriane de Athenes.

VII. THE LEGEND OF PHILOMELA.

Incipit Legenda Philomene.

Deus dator formarum.

Thou yiver of the formes, that hast wrought
 The faire world, and bare hit in thy thocht
 Eternally, or thou thy werk began,
 Why madest thou, unto the slaundre of man,
 Or—al be that hit was not thy doing,
 As for that fyn to make swiche a thing—
 Why suffrest thou that Tereus was bore,
 That is in love so fals and so forswore,
 That, fro this world up to the firste hevene,
 Corrupteth, whan that folk his name nevene?
 And, as to me, so grisly was his dede,
 That, whan that I his foule story rede,
 Myn eyen wexen foule and sore also;
 Yit last the venim of so longe ago,
 That hit enfecteth him that wol beholde
 The story of Tereus, of which I tolde.

Of Trace was he lord, and kin to Marte,
 The cruel god that stant with bloody darte;
 And wedded had he, with a blisful chere,
 King Pandiones faire doghter dere,
 That highte Progne, flour of her contree,
 Thogh Iuno list nat at the feste be,
 Ne Ymeneus, that god of wedding is;
 But at the feste redy been, y-wis,
 The furies three, with alle hir mortel brond.
 The owle al night aboute the balkes wond,
 That prophet is of wo and of mischaunce.
 This revel, ful of songe and ful of daunce,
 Lasteth a fourtenight, or litel lasse.
 But, shortly of this story for to passe,
 For I am wery of him for to telle,
 Five yeer his wyf and he togeder dwelle,
 Til on a day she gan so sore longe
 To seen her suster, that she saw nat longe,
 That for desyr she niste what to seye.
 But to her husband gan she for to preye,
 For goddes love, that she ones goon
 Her suster for to seen, and come anoon,
 Or elles, but she moste to her wende,
 She preyde him, that he wolde after her sende;
 And this was, day by day, al her prayere
 With al humblesse of wyfhood, word, and chere.
 This Tereus let make his shippes yare,
 And into Grece him-self is forth y-fare
 Unto his fader in lawe, and gan him preye
 To vouche-sauf that, for a month or tweye,
 That Philomene, his wyves suster, mighte
 On Progne his wyf but ones have a sighte—
 'And she shal come to yow again anoon.
 Myself with her wol bothe come and goon,
 And as myn hertes lyf I wol her kepe.'
 This olde Pandion, this king, gan wepe
 For tendernesse of herte, for to leve
 His doghter goon, and for to yive her leve;
 Of al this world he lovede no-thing so;
 But at the laste leve hath she to go.
 For Philomene, with salte teres eke,
 Gan of her fader grace to beseke
 To seen her suster, that her longeth so;
 And him embraceth with her armes two.
 And therwith-al so yong and fair was she
 That, whan that Terëus saw her beautee,
 And of array that ther was noon her liche,
 And yit of bountee was she two so riche,
 He caste his fyry herte upon her so
 That he wol have her, how so that hit go,
 And with his wyles kneled and so preyde,
 Til at the laste Pandion thus seyde:—
 'Now, sone,' quod he, 'that art to me so dere,
 I thee betake my yonge doghter here,
 That bereth the key of al my hertes lyf.

And grete wel my doghter and thy wyf,
And yive her leve somtyme for to pleye,
That she may seen me ones er I deye.'
And soothly, he hath mad him riche feste,
And to his folk, the moste and eek the leste,
That with him com; and yaf him yiftes grete,
And him conveyeth through the maister-strete
Of Athenes, and to the see him broghte,
And turneth hoom; no malice he ne thoghte.
The ores pulleth forth the vessel faste,
And into Trace arriveth at the laste,
And up into a forest he her ledde,
And to a cave privily him spedde;
And, in this derke cave, yif her leste,
Or leste noght, he bad her for to reste;
Of whiche her herte agroos, and seyde thus,
'Wher is my suster, brother Tereus?'
And therwith-al she wepte tenderly,
And quook for fere, pale and pitously,
Right as the lamb that of the wolf is biten;
Or as the colver, that of the egle is smiten,
And is out of his clawes forth escaped,
Yet hit is afered and awhaped
Lest hit be hent eft-sones, so sat she.
But utterly hit may non other be.
By force hath he, this traitour, doon that dede,
That he hath reft her of her maydenhede,
Maugree her heed, by strengthe and by his might.
Lo! here a dede of men, and that a right!
She cryeth 'suster!' with ful loude stevene,
And 'fader dere!' and 'help me, god in hevene!'
Al helpeth nat; and yet this false thief
Hath doon this lady yet a more mischeef,
For fere lest she sholde his shame crye,
And doon him openly a vilanye,
And with his swerd her tong of kerveth he,
And in a castel made her for to be
Ful privily in prison evermore,
And kepte her to his usage and his store,
So that she mighte him nevermore asterte.
O sely Philomene! wo is thyn herte;
God wreke thee, and sende thee thy bone!
Now is hit tyme I make an ende sone.
This Tereus is to his wyf y-come,
And in his armes hath his wyf y-nome,
And pitously he weep, and shook his heed,
And swor her that he fond her suster deed;
For which this sely Progne hath swich wo,
That ny her sorweful herte brak a-two;
And thus in teres lete I Progne dwelle,
And of her suster forth I wol yow telle.
This woful lady lerned had in youthe
So that she werken and enbrouden couthe,
And weven in her stole the radevore
As hit of women hath be woned yore.

And, shortly for to seyn, she hath her fille
 Of mete and drink, and clothing at her wille,
 And coude eek rede, and wel y-nogh endyte,
 But with a penne coude she nat wryte;
 But lettres can she weven to and fro,
 So that, by that the yeer was al a-go,
 She had y-woven in a stamin large
 How she was broght from Athenes in a barge,
 And in cave how that she was broght;
 And al the thing that Tereus hath wrought,
 She waf hit wel, and wroot the story above,
 How she was served for her suster love;
 And to a knave a ring she yaf anoon,
 And prayed him, by signes, for to goon
 Unto the quene, and beren her that clooth,
 And by signes swor him many an ooth,
 She sholde him yeve what she geten mighte.
 This knave anoon unto the quene him dighte,
 And took hit her, and al the maner tolde.
 And, whan that Progne hath this thing beholde,
 No word she spak, for sorwe and eek for rage;
 But feyned her to goon on pilgrimage
 To Bachus temple; and, in a litel stounde,
 Her dombe suster sitting hath she founde,
 Weping in the castel her aloon.
 Allas! the wo, the compleint, and the moon
 That Progne upon her dombe suster maketh!
 In armes everich of hem other taketh,
 And thus I lete hem in hir sorwe dwelle.
 The remenant is no charge for to telle,
 For this is al and som, thus was she served,
 That never harm a-gilte ne deserved
 Unto this cruel man, that she of wiste.
 Ye may be war of men, yif that yow liste.
 For, al be that he wol nat, for his shame,
 Doon so as Tereus, to lese his name,
 Ne serve yow as a mordroure or a knave,
 Ful litel whyle shul ye trewe him have,
 That wol I seyn, al were he now my brother,
 But hit so be that he may have non other.

Explicit Legenda Philomene.

VIII. THE LEGEND OF PHYLLIS.

Incipit Legenda Phillis.

By preve as wel as by auctoritee,
 That wikked fruit cometh of a wikked tree,
 That may ye finde, if that it lyketh yow.
 But for this ende I speke this as now,
 To telle you of false Demophon.
 In love a falsher herde I never non,
 But-if hit were his fader Theseus.
 'God, for his grace, fro swich oon kepe us!'
 Thus may thise women prayen that hit here.
 Now to theeffect turne I of my matere.

Destroyed is of Troye the citee;
This Demophon com sailing in the see
Toward Athenes, to his paleys large;
With him com many a ship and many a barge
Ful of his folk, of which ful many oon
Is wounded sore, and seek, and wo begoon.
And they han at the sege longe y-lain.
Behinde him com a wind and eek a rain
That shoof so sore, his sail ne mighte stonde,
Him were lever than al the world a-londe,
So hunteth him the tempest to and fro.
So derk hit was, he coude nowher go;
And with a wawe brosten was his stere.
His ship was rent so lowe, in swich manere,
That carpenter ne coude hit nat amende.
The see, by nighte, as any torche brende
For wood, and posseth him now up now down,
Til Neptune hath of him compassioun,
And Thetis, Chorus, Triton, and they alle,
And maden him upon a lond to falle,
Wher-of that Phillis lady was and quene,
Ligurgus doghter, fairer on to sene
Than is the flour again the brighte sonne.
Unnethe is Demophon to londe y-wonne,
Wayk and eek wery, and his folk for-pyned
Of werinesse, and also enfamyned;
And to the deeth he almost was y-driven.
His wyse folk to conseil han him yiven
To seken help and socour of the queen,
And loken what his grace mighte been,
And maken in that lond som chevisaunce,
To kepen him fro wo and fro mischaunce.
For seek was he, and almost at the deeth;
Unnethe mighte he speke or drawe his breeth,
And lyth in Rodopeya him for to reste.
Whan he may walke, him thoughte hit was the beste
Unto the court to seken for socour.
Men knewe him wel, and diden him honour;
For at Athenes duk and lord was he,
As Theseus his fader hadde y-be,
That in his tyme was of greet renoun,
No man so greet in al his regioun;
And lyk his fader of face and of stature,
And fals of love; hit com him of nature;
As doth the fox Renard, the foxes sone,
Of kinde he coude his olde faders wone
Withoute lore, as can a drake swimme,
Whan hit is caught and caried to the brimme.
This honourable Phillis doth him chere,
Her lyketh wel his port and his manere.
But for I am agroted heer-biforn
To wryte of hem that been in love forsworn,
And eek to haste me in my legende,
Which to performe god me grace sende,
Therfor I passe shortly in this wyse;

Ye han wel herd of Theseus devyse
 In the betraising of fair Adriane,
 That of her pite kepte him from his bane.
 At shorte wordes, right so Demophon
 The same wey, the same path hath gon
 That dide his false fader Theseus.
 For unto Phillis hath he sworn thus,
 To wedden her, and her his trouthe plighte,
 And piked of her al the good he mighte,
 Whan he was hool and sound and hadde his reste;
 And doth with Phillis what so that him leste.
 And wel coude I, yif that me leste so,
 Tellen al his doing to and fro.
 He seide, unto his contree moste he saile,
 For ther he wolde her wedding apparaile
 As fil to her honour and his also.
 And openly he took his leve tho,
 And hath her sworn, he wolde nat soiorne,
 But in a month he wolde again retorne.
 And in that lond let make his ordinaunce
 As verray lord, and took the obeisaunce
 Wel and hoonly, and let his shippes dighte,
 And hoom he goth the nexte wey he mighte;
 For unto Phillis yit ne com he noght.
 And that hath she so harde and sore aboght,
 Allas! that, as the stories us recorde,
 She was her owne deeth right with a corde,
 Whan that she saw that Demophon her trayed.
 But to him first she wroot and faste him prayed
 He wolde come, and her deliver of peyne,
 As I reherse shal a word or tweyne.
 Me list nat vouche-sauf on him to swinke,
 Ne spende on him a penne ful of inke,
 For fals in love was he, right as his syre;
 The devil sette hir soules bothe a-fyre!
 But of the lettre of Phillis wol I wryte
 A word or tweyne, al-thogh hit be but lyte.
 'Thyn hostesse,' quod she, 'O Demophon,
 Thy Phillis, which that is so wo begon,
 Of Rodopeye, upon yow moot compleyne,
 Over the terme set betwix us tweyne,
 That ye ne holden forward, as ye seyde;
 Your anker, which ye in our haven leyde,
 Highte us, that ye wolde comen, out of doute,
 Or that the mone ones wente aboute.
 But tymes foure the mone hath hid her face
 Sin thilke day ye wente fro this place,
 And foure tymes light the world again.
 But for al that, yif I shal soothly sain,
 Yit hath the stream of Sitho nat y-brought
 From Athenes the ship; yit comth hit noght.
 And, yif that ye the terme rekne wolde,
 As I or other trewe lovers sholde,
 I pleyne not, god wot, beform my day.'—
 But al her lettre wryten I ne may

By ordre, for hit were to me a charge;
 Her lettre was right long and ther-to large;
 But here and there in ryme I have hit laid,
 Ther as me thoughte that she wel hath said.—
 She seide, 'thy sailes comen nat again,
 Ne to thy word ther nis no fey certein;
 But I wot why ye come nat,' quod she;
 'For I was of my love to you so free.
 And of the goddes that ye han forswore,
 Yif that hir vengeance falle on yow therfore,
 Ye be nat suffisaunt to bere the peyne.
 To moche trusted I, wel may I pleyne,
 Upon your linage and your faire tonge,
 And on your teres falsly out y-wronge.
 How coude ye wepe so by craft?' quod she;
 'May ther swiche teres feyned be?
 Now certes, yif ye wolde have in memorie,
 Hit oghte be to yow but litel glorie
 To have a sely mayde thus betrayed!
 To god,' quod she, 'preye I, and ofte have prayed,
 That hit be now the grettest prys of alle,
 And moste honour that ever yow shal befalle!
 And whan thyn olde auncestres peynted be,
 In which men may hir worthinesse see,
 Than, preye I god, thou peynted be also,
 That folk may reden, for-by as they go,
 "Lo! this is he, that with his flaterye
 Betrayed hath and doon her vilanye
 That was his trewe love in thoghte and dede!"
 But sothly, of oo point yit may they rede,
 That ye ben lyk your fader as in this;
 For he begyled Adriane, y-wis,
 With swiche an art and swiche sotelte
 As thou thy-selven hast begyled me.
 As in that point, al-thogh hit be nat fayr,
 Thou folwest him, certein, and art his eyr.
 But sin thus sinfully ye me begyle,
 My body mote ye seen, within a while,
 Right in the haven of Athenes fletinge,
 With-outen sepulture and buryinge;
 Thogh ye ben harder then is any stoon.'
 And, whan this lettre was forth sent anoon,
 And knew how brotel and how fals he was,
 She for dispeyr for-dide herself, allas!
 Swich sorwe hath she, for she besette her so.
 Be war, ye women, of your sotil fo,
 Sin yit this day men may ensample see;
 And trusteth, as in love, no man but me.
Explicit Legenda Phillis.

IX. THE LEGEND OF HYPERMNESTRA.

Incipit Legenda Ypermistre.

In Grece whylom weren brethren two,
 Of whiche that oon was called Danao,

That many a sone hath of his body wonne,
 As swiche false lovers ofte conne.
 Among his sones alle ther was oon
 That aldermost he lovede of everichoon.
 And whan this child was born, this Danao
 Shoop him a name, and called him Lino.
 That other brother called was Egiste,
 That was of love as fals as ever him liste,
 And many a doghter gat he in his lyve;
 Of which he gat upon his righte wyve
 A doghter dere, and dide her for to calle
 Ypermistra, yongest of hem alle;
 The whiche child, of her nativitee,
 To alle gode thewes born was she,
 As lyked to the goddes, or she was born,
 That of the shefe she sholde be the corn;
 The Wirdes, that we clepen Destinee,
 Hath shapen her that she mot nedes be
 Pitouse, sadde, wyse, and trewe as steel;
 And to this woman hit accordeth weel.
 For, though that Venus yaf her greet beautee,
 With Iupiter compouned so was she
 That conscience, trouthe, and drede of shame,
 And of her wyfhood for to kepe her name,
 This, thoughte her, was felicitee as here.
 And rede Mars was, that tyme of the yere,
 So feble, that his malice is him raft,
 Repressed hath Venus his cruel craft;
 What with Venus and other oppressioun
 Of houses, Mars his venim is adoun,
 That Ypermistra dar nat handle a knyf
 In malice, thogh she sholde lese her lyf.
 But natheles, as heven gan tho turne,
 To badde aspectes hath she of Saturne,
 That made her for to deyen in prisoun,
 As I shal after make menciouun.
 To Danao and Egistes also—
 Al-thogh so be that they were brethren two,
 For thilke tyme nas spared no linage—
 Hit lyked hem to maken mariage
 Betwix Ypermistra and him Lino,
 And casten swiche a day hit shal be so;
 And ful acorded was hit witterly;
 The array is wroght, the tyme is faste by.
 And thus Lino hath of his fadres brother
 The doghter wedded, and eche of hem hath other.
 The torches brennen and the lampes brighte,
 The sacrifices been ful redy dighte;
 Thencens out of the fyre reketh sote,
 The flour, the leef is rent up by the rote
 To maken garlands and corounes hye;
 Ful is the place of soun of minstrelcye,
 Of songes amorous of mariage,
 As thilke tyme was the pleyn usage.
 And this was in the paleys of Egiste,

That in his hous was lord, right as him liste;
And thus the day they dryven to an ende;
The frendes taken leve, and hoom they wende.
The night is come, the bryd shal go to bedde;
Egiste to his chambre faste him spedde,
And privily he let his doghter calle.
Whan that the hous was voided of hem alle,
He loked on his doghter with glad chere,
And to her spak, as ye shul after here.
'My righte doghter, tresor of myn herte!
Sin first that day that shapen was my sherte,
Or by the fatal sustren had my dom,
So ny myn herte never thing me com
As thou, myn Ypermistra, doghter dere!
Tak heed what I thy fader sey thee here,
And werk after thy wyser ever-mo.
For alderfirste, doghter, I love thee so
That al the world to me nis half so leef;
Ne I nolde rede thee to thy mischeef
For al the gode under the colde mone;
And what I mene, hit shal be seid right sone,
With protestacioun, as in this wyse,
That, but thou do as I shal thee devyse,
Thou shalt be deed, by him that al hath wrought!
At shorte wordes, thou nescapest noght
Out of my paleys, or that thou be deed,
But thou consente and werke after my reed;
Tak this to thee for ful conclusioun.'
This Ypermistra caste her eyen down,
And quook as dooth the leef of aspe grene;
Deed wex her hewe, and lyk as ash to sene,
And seyde, 'lord and fader, al your wille,
After my might, god wot, I shal fulfille,
So hit to me be no confusioun.'
'I nil,' quod he, 'have noon excepcioun;
And out he caughte a knyf, as rasour kene;
'Hyd this,' quod he, 'that hit be nat y-sene;
And, whan thyn husbond is to bedde y-go,
Whyl that he slepeth, cut his throte a-two.
For in my dremes hit is warned me
How that my newew shal my bane be,
But whiche I noot, wherfor I wol be siker.
Yif thou sey nay, we two shul have a biker
As I have seyde, by him that I have sworn.'
This Ypermistra hath ny her wit forlon;
And, for to passen harmles of that place,
She graunted him; ther was non other grace.
And therwith-al a costrel taketh he,
And seyde, 'herof a draught, or two or three,
Yif him to drinke, whan he goth to reste,
And he shal slepe as longe as ever thee leste,
The narcotiks and opies been so stronge:
And go thy wey, lest that him thinke longe.'
Out comth the bryd, and with ful sober chere,
As is of maidens ofte the manere,

To chambre is broght with revel and with songe,
 And shortly, lest this tale be to longe,
 This Lino and she ben sone broght to bedde;
 And every wight out at the dore him spedde.
 The night is wasted, and he fel a-slepe;
 Ful tenderly beginneth she to wepe.
 She rist her up, and dredfully she quaketh,
 As doth the braunche that Zephirus shaketh,
 And husht were alle in Argon that citee.
 As cold as any frost now wexeth she;
 For pite by the herte her streyneth so,
 And dred of death doth her so moche wo,
 That thryes doun she fil in swiche a were.
 She rist her up, and stakereth heer and there,
 And on her handes faste loketh she.
 'Allas! and shul my handes bloody be?
 I am a maid, and, as by my nature,
 And by my semblant and by my vesture,
 Myn handes been nat shapen for a knyf,
 As for to reve no man fro his lyf.
 What devil have I with the knyf to do?
 And shal I have my throte corve a-two?
 Than shal I blede, alas! and me beshende;
 And nedes cost this thing mot have an ende;
 Or he or I mot nedes lese our lyf.
 Now certes,' quod she, 'sin I am his wyf,
 And hath my feith, yit is it bet for me
 For to be deed in wyfly honestee
 Than be a traitour living in my shame.
 Be as be may, for earnest or for game,
 He shal awake, and ryse and go his way
 Out at this goter, or that hit be day!'—
 And weep ful tenderly upon his face,
 And in her armes gan him to embrace,
 And him she roggeth and awaketh softe;
 And at the window leep he fro the lofte
 Whan she hath warned him, and doon him bote.
 This Lino swifte was, and light of fote,
 And from his wyf he ran a ful good pas.
 This sely woman is so wayk, alas!
 And helples so, that, or that she fer wente,
 Her cruel fader dide her for to hente.
 Allas! Lino! why art thou so unkinde?
 Why ne haddest thou remembred in thy minde
 To taken her, and lad her forth with thee?
 For, whan she saw that goon away was he,
 And that she mighte nat so faste go,
 Ne folwen him, she sette her doun right tho,
 Til she was caught and fetered in prisoun.
 This tale is seid for this conclusioun....
 [Unfinished.]

Chaucer: Canterbury Tales

THE PROLOGUE.

Here biginneth the Book of the Tales of Caunterbury.

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote
The droghte of Marche hath perced to the rote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour,
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his swete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his halfe cours y-ronne,
And smale fowles maken melodye,
That slepen al the night with open yë,
(So priketh hem nature in hir corages):
Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages
(And palmers for to seken straunge strondes)
To ferne halwes, couthe in sondry londes;
And specially, from every shires ende
Of Engelond, to Caunterbury they wende,
The holy blisful martir for to seke,
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seke.
Bifel that, in that seson on a day,
In Southwerk at the Tabard as I lay
Redy to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Caunterbury with ful devout corage,
At night was come in-to that hostelrye
Wel nyne and twenty in a companye,
Of sondry folk, by aventure y-falle
In felawshipe, and pilgrims were they alle,
That toward Caunterbury wolden ryde;
The chambres and the stables weren wyde,
And wel we weren esed atte beste.
And shortly, whan the sonne was to reste,
So hadde I spoken with hem everichon,
That I was of hir felawshipe anon,
And made forward erly for to ryse,
To take our wey, ther as I yow devyse.
But natheles, whyl I have tyme and space,
Er that I ferther in this tale pace,
Me thinketh it acordaunt to resoun,
To telle yow al the condicioun
Of ech of hem, so as it semed me,
And whiche they weren, and of what degree;
And eek in what array that they were inne:

And at a knight than wol I first biginne.

Knight.

A Knight ther was, and that a worthy man,
That fro the tyme that he first bigan
To ryden out, he loved chivalrye,
Trouthe and honour, fredom and curteisye.
Ful worthy was he in his lordes werre,
And therto hadde he riden (no man ferre)
As wel in Cristendom as hethenesse,
And ever honoured for his worthinesse.
At Alisaundre he was, whan it was wonne;
Ful ofte tyme he hadde the bord bigonne
Aboven alle naciouns in Pruce.
In Lettow hadde he reysed and in Ruce,
No Cristen man so ofte of his degree.
In Gernade at the sege eek hadde he be
Of Algezir, and riden in Belmarye.
At Lyeys was he, and at Satalye,
Whan they were wonne; and in the Grete See
At many a noble aryve hadde he be.
At mortal batailles hadde he been fiftene,
And foughten for our feith at Tramissene
In listes thryes, and ay slayn his foo.
This ilke worthy knight had been also
Somytyme with the lord of Palatye,
Ageyn another hethen in Turkye:
And evermore he hadde a sovereyn prys.
And though that he were worthy, he was wys,
And of his port as meke as is a mayde.
He never yet no vileinye ne sayde
In al his lyf, un-to no maner wight.
He was a verray parfit gentil knight.
But for to tellen yow of his array,
His hors were gode, but he was nat gay.
Of fustian he wered a gipoun
Al bismotered with his habergeoun;
For he was late y-come from his viage,
And wente for to doon his pilgrimage.

Squyer.

With him ther was his sone, a yong Squyer,
A lovyere, and a lusty bachelier,
With lokkes crulle, as they were leyd in presse.
Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.
Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,
And wonderly deliver, and greet of strengthe.
And he had been somtyme in chivachye,
In Flaundres, in Artoys, and Picardye,
And born him wel, as of so litel space,
In hope to stonden in his lady grace.
Embrouded was he, as it were a mede
Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and rede.
Singing he was, or floytinge, al the day;
He was as fresh as is the month of May.
Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde.
Wel coude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde.

He coude songes make and wel endyte,
 Iuste and eek daunce, and wel purtreye and wryte,
 So hote he lovede, that by nightertale
 He sleep namore than dooth a nightingale.
 Curteys he was, lowly, and servisable,
 And carf biforn his fader at the table.

Yeman.

A Yeman hadde he, and servaunts namo
 At that tyme, for him liste ryde so;
 And he was clad in cote and hood of grene;
 A sheef of pecok-arwes brighte and kene
 Under his belt he bar ful thriftily;
 (Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly:
 His arwes drouped noght with fetheres lowe),
 And in his hand he bar a mighty bowe.
 A not-heed hadde he, with a broun visage.
 Of wode-craft wel coude he al the usage.
 Upon his arm he bar a gay bracer,
 And by his syde a swerd and a bokeler,
 And on that other syde a gay daggere,
 Harneised wel, and sharp as point of spere;
 A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
 An horn he bar, the bawdrik was of grene;
 A forster was he, soothly, as I gesse.

Prioressse.

Ther was also a Nonne, a Prioressse,
 That of hir smyling was ful simple and coy;
 Hir gretteste ooth was but by sēynt Loy;
 And she was cleped madame Eglentyne.
 Ful wel she song the service divyne,
 Entuned in hir nose ful semely;
 And Frensh she spak ful faire and fetisly,
 After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,
 For Frensh of Paris was to hir unknowe.
 At mete wel y-taught was she with-alle;
 She leet no morsel from hir lippes falle,
 Ne wette hir fingres in hir sauce depe.
 Wel coude she carie a morsel, and wel kepe,
 That no drope ne fille up-on hir brest.
 In curteisye was set ful muche hir lest.
 Hir over lippe wyped she so clene,
 That in hir coppe was no ferthing sene
 Of grece, whan she dronken hadde hir draughte.
 Ful semely after hir mete she raughte,
 And sikerly she was of greet disport,
 And ful plesaunt, and amiable of port,
 And peyned hir to countrefete chere
 Of court, and been estatlich of manere,
 And to ben holden digne of reverence.
 But, for to speken of hir conscience,
 She was so charitable and so pitous,
 She wolde wepe, if that she sawe a mous
 Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde.
 Of smale houndes had she, that she fedde
 With rosted flesh, or milk and wastel-breed.

But sore weep she if oon of hem were deed,
 Or if men smoot it with a yerde smerte:
 And al was conscience and tendre herte.
 Ful semely hir wimpel pinched was;
 Hir nose tretys; hir eyen greye as glas;
 Hir mouth ful smal, and ther-to softe and reed;
 But sikerly she hadde a fair forheed;
 It was almost a spanne brood, I trowe;
 For, hardily, she was nat undergrowe.
 Ful fetis was hir cloke, as I was war.
 Of smal coral aboute hir arm she bar
 A peire of bedes, gauded al with grene;
 And ther-on heng a broche of gold ful shene,
 On which ther was first write a crowned A,
 And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Nonne.

Another Nonne with hir hadde she,

3 Preestes.

That was hir chapeleyne, and Preestes three.

Monk.

A Monk ther was, a fair for the maistrye,
 An out-rydere, that lovede venerye;
 A manly man, to been an abbot able.
 Ful many a deyntee hors hadde he in stable:
 And, whan he rood, men mighte his brydel here
 Ginglen in a whistling wind as clere,
 And eek as loude as dooth the chapel-belle,
 Ther as this lord was keper of the celle.
 The reule of seint Maure or of seint Beneit,
 By-cause that it was old and som-del streit,
 This ilke monk leet olde thinges pace,
 And held after the newe world the space.
 He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
 That seith, that hunters been nat holy men;
 Ne that a monk, whan he is cloisterlees,
 Is lykned til a fish that is waterlees;
 This is to seyn, a monk out of his cloistre.
 But thilke text held he nat worth an oistre;
 And I seyde, his opinioun was good.
 What sholde he studie, and make him-selven wood,
 Upon a book in cloistre alwey to poure,
 Or swinken with his handes, and laboure,
 As Austin bit? How shal the world be served?
 Lat Austin have his swink to him reserved.
 Therfore he was a pricasour aright;
 Grehoundes he hadde, as swifte as fowel in flight;
 Of priking and of hunting for the hare
 Was al his lust, for no cost wolde he spare.
 I seigh his sleeves purfiled at the hond
 With grys, and that the fyneste of a lond;
 And, for to festne his hood under his chin,
 He hadde of gold y-wroght a curious pin:
 A love-knotte in the gretter ende ther was.
 His heed was balled, that shoon as any glas,
 And eek his face, as he had been anoint.

He was a lord ful fat and in good point;
 His eyen stepe, and rollinge in his heed,
 That stemed as a forneys of a leed;
 His botes souple, his hors in greet estat.
 Now certeinly he was a fair prelat;
 He was nat pale as a for-pyned goost.
 A fat swan loved he best of any roost.
 His palfrey was as broun as is a berye.

Frere.

A Frere ther was, a wantown and a merye,
 A limitour, a ful solempne man.
 In alle the ordres foure is noon that can
 So muche of daliaunce and fair langage.
 He hadde maad ful many a mariage
 Of yonge wommen, at his owne cost.
 Un-to his ordre he was a noble post.
 Ful wel biloved and famulier was he
 With frankeleyns over-al in his contree,
 And eek with worthy wommen of the toun:
 For he had power of confessioun,
 As seyde him-self, more than a curat,
 For of his ordre he was licentiat.
 Ful swetely herde he confessioun,
 And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
 He was an esy man to yeve penaunce
 Ther as he wiste to han a good pitaunce;
 For unto a povre ordre for to yive
 Is signe that a man is wel y-shrive.
 For if he yaf, he dorste make avaunt,
 He wiste that a man was repentaunt.
 For many a man so hard is of his herte,
 He may nat wepe al-thogh him sore smerte.
 Therfore, in stede of weping and preyes,
 Men moot yeve silver to the povre freres.
 His tipet was ay farsed ful of knyves
 And pinnes, for to yeven faire wyves.
 And certeinly he hadde a mery note;
 Wel coude he singe and pleyen on a rote.
 Of yeddinges he bar utterly the prys.
 His nekke whyt was as the flour-de-lys;
 Ther-to he strong was as a champioun.
 He knew the tavernes wel in every toun,
 And everich hostiler and tappestere
 Bet than a lazor or a beggestere;
 For un-to swich a worthy man as he
 Acorded nat, as by his facultee,
 To have with seke lazars aqueyntaunce.
 It is nat honest, it may nat avaunce
 For to delen with no swich poraille,
 But al with riche and sellers of vitaille.
 And over-al, ther as profit sholde aryse,
 Curteys he was, and lowly of servyse.
 Ther nas no man no-wher so vertuous.
 He was the beste beggere in his hous;
 [And yaf a certeyn ferme for the graunt;

Noon of his bretheren cam ther in his haunt;]
 For thogh a widwe hadde noght a sho,
 So plesaunt was his "*In principio*,"
 Yet wolde he have a ferthing, er he wente.
 His purchas was wel bettre than his rente.
 And rage he coude, as it were right a whelpe.
 In love-dayes ther coude he muchel helpe.
 For there he was nat lyk a cloisterer,
 With a thredbar cope, as is a povre scolere,
 But he was lyk a maister or a pope.
 Of double worsted was his semi-cope,
 That rounded as a belle out of the presse.
 Somwhat he lipped, for his wantownesse,
 To make his English swete up-on his tonge;
 And in his harping, whan that he had songe,
 His eyen twinkled in his heed aright,
 As doon the sterres in the frosty night.
 This worthy limitour was cleped Huberd.

Marchant.

A Marchant was ther with a forked berd,
 In mottelee, and hye on horse he sat,
 Up-on his heed a Flaundrish bever hat;
 His botes clasped faire and fetisly.
 His resons he spak ful solempnely,
 Souninge alway thencrees of his winning.
 He wolde the see were kept for any thing
 Bitwixe Middelburgh and Orewelle.
 Wel coude he in eschaunge sheeldes selle.
 This worthy man ful wel his wit bisette;
 Ther wiste no wight that he was in dette,
 So estatly was he of his governaunce,
 With his bargaynes, and with his chevisaunce.
 For sothe he was a worthy man with-alle,
 But sooth to seyn, I noot how men him calle.

Clerk.

A Clerk ther was of Oxenford also,
 That un-to logik hadde longe y-go.
 As lene was his hors as is a rake,
 And he nas nat right fat, I undertake;
 But loked holwe, and ther-to soberly.
 Ful thredbar was his overest courtepy;
 For he had geten him yet no benefyce,
 Ne was so worldly for to have offyce.
 For him was lever have at his beddes heed
 Twenty bokes, clad in blak or reed,
 Of Aristotle and his philosophye,
 Than robes riche, or fithele, or gay sautrye.
 But al be that he was a philosophre,
 Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre;
 But al that he mighte of his freendes hente,
 On bokes and on lerninge he it spente,
 And bisily gan for the soules preye
 Of hem that yaf him wher-with to scoleye.
 Of studie took he most cure and most hede.
 Noght o word spak he more than was nede,

And that was seyde in forme and reverence,
 And short and quik, and ful of hy sentence.
 Souninge in moral vertu was his speche,
 And gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.

Man of Lawe.

A Sergeant of the Lawe, war and wys,
 That often hadde been at the parvys,
 Ther was also, ful riche of excellence.
 Discreet he was, and of greet reverence:
 He semed swich, his wordes weren so wyse.
 Iustyce he was ful often in assyse,
 By patente, and by pleyn commissioun;
 For his science, and for his heigh renoun
 Of fees and robes hadde he many oon.
 So greet a purchasour was no-wher noon.
 Al was fee simple to him in effect,
 His purchasing mighte nat been infect.
 No-wher so bisy a man as he ther nas,
 And yet he semed bisier than he was.
 In termes hadde he caas and domes alle,
 That from the tyme of king William were falle.
 Therto he coude endyte, and make a thing,
 Ther coude no wight pinche at his wryting;
 And every statut coude he pleyn by rote.
 He rood but hoomly in a medlee cote
 Girt with a ceint of silk, with barres smale;
 Of his array telle I no lenger tale.

Frankeleyn.

A Frankeleyn was in his companye;
 Whyt was his berd, as is the dayesyne.
 Of his complexioun he was sangwyn.
 Wel loved he by the morwe a sop in wyn.
 To liven in delyt was ever his wone,
 For he was Epicurus owne sone,
 That heeld opinioun, that pleyn delyt
 Was verrailly felicitye parfyt.
 An housholdere, and that a greet, was he;
 Seint Iulian he was in his contree.
 His breed, his ale, was alwey after oon;
 A bettre envyned man was no-wher noon.
 With-oute bake mete was never his hous,
 Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteuous,
 It snewed in his hous of mete and drinke,
 Of alle deyntees that men coude thinke.
 After the sondry sesons of the yeer,
 So chaunged he his mete and his soper.
 Ful many a fat partrich hadde he in mewe,
 And many a breem and many a luce in stewe.
 Wo was his cook, but-if his sauce were
 Poynaunt and sharp, and redy al his gere.
 His table dormant in his halle alway
 Stood redy covered al the longe day.
 At sessiouns ther was he lord and sire;
 Ful ofte tyme he was knight of the shire.
 An anlas and a gipser al of silk

Heng at his girdel, whyt as morne milk.
 A shirreve hadde he been, and a countour;
 Was no-wher such a worthy vavasour.

Habaerdassher.

An Haberdassher and a Carpenter,

Carpenter.

A Webbe, a Dyere, and a Tapicer,

Webbe. Dyere.

Were with us eek, clothed in o liverree,

Tapicer.

Of a solempne and greet fraternitee.
 Ful fresh and newe hir gere apyked was;
 Hir knyves were y-chaped noght with bras,
 But al with silver, wroght ful clene and weel,
 Hir girdles and hir pouches every-deel.
 Wel semed ech of hem a fair burgeys,
 To sitten in a yeldhalle on a deys.
 Everich, for the wisdom that he can,
 Was shaply for to been an alderman.
 For catel hadde they y-nogh and rente,
 And eek hir wyves wolde it wel assente;
 And elles certein were they to blame.
 It is ful fair to been y-clept "*ma dame*,"
 And goon to vigilyës al bifore,
 And have a mantel royalliche y-bore.

Cook.

A Cook they hadde with hem for the nones,
 To boille the chiknes with the mary-bones,
 And poudre-marchant tart, and galingale.
 Wel coude he knowe a draughte of London ale.
 He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye,
 Maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye.
 But greet harm was it, as it thoughte me,
 That on his shine a mormal hadde he;
 For blankmanger, that made he with the beste.

Shipman.

A Shipman was ther, woning fer by weste:
 For aught I woot, he was of Dertemouthe.
 He rood up-on a rouncy, as he couthe,
 In a gowne of falding to the knee.
 A daggere hanging on a laas hadde he
 Aboute his nekke under his arm adoun.
 The hote somer had maad his hewe al broun;
 And, certeinly, he was a good felawe.
 Ful many a draughte of wyn had he y-drawe
 From Burdeux-ward, whyl that the chapman sleep.
 Of nyce conscience took he no keep.
 If that he faught, and hadde the hyer hond,
 By water he sente hem hoom to every lond.
 But of his craft to rekene wel his tydes,
 His stremes and his daungers him bisydes,
 His herberwe and his mone, his lodemenage,
 Ther nas noon swich from Hulle to Cartage.
 Hardy he was, and wys to undertake;
 With many a tempest hadde his berd been shake.

He knew wel alle the havenes, as they were,
 From Gootlond to the cape of Finistere,
 And every cryke in Britayne and in Spayne;
 His barge y-cleped was the Maudelayne.

Doctour.

With us ther was a Doctour of Phisyk,
 In al this world ne was ther noon him lyk
 To speke of phisik and of surgerye;
 For he was grounded in astronomye.
 He kepte his pacient a ful greet del
 In houres, by his magik naturel.
 Wel coude he fortunen the ascendent
 Of his images for his pacient.
 He knew the cause of everich maladye,
 Were it of hoot or cold, or moiste, or drye,
 And where engendred, and of what humour;
 He was a verrey parfit practisour.
 The cause y-knowe, and of his harm the rote,
 Anon he yaf the seke man his bote.
 Ful redy hadde he his apothecaries,
 To sende him drogges and his letuaries,
 For ech of hem made other for to winne;
 Hir frendschipe nas nat newe to biginne.
 Wel knew he the olde Esculapius,
 And Deiscorides, and eek Rufus,
 Old Ypocras, Haly, and Galien;
 Serapion, Razis, and Avicen;
 Averrois, Damascien, and Constantyn;
 Bernard, and Gatesden, and Gilbertyn.
 Of his diete mesurable was he,
 For it was of no superfluitee,
 But of greet norissing and digestible.
 His studie was but litel on the Bible.
 In sangwin and in pers he clad was al,
 Lynced with taffata and with sendal;
 And yet he was but esy of dispence;
 He kepte that he wan in pestilence.
 For gold in phisik is a cordial,
 Therfore he lovede gold in special.

Wyf of Bathe.

A good Wyf was ther of bisyde Bathe,
 But she was som-del deaf, and that was scathe.
 Of clooth-making she hadde swiche an haunt,
 She passed hem of Ypres and of Gaunt.
 In al the parisshe wyf ne was ther noon
 That to the offring bifore hir sholde goon;
 And if ther dide, certeyn, so wrooth was she,
 That she was out of alle charitee.
 Hir coverchiefs ful fyne were of ground;
 I dorste swere they weyeden ten pound
 That on a Sonday were upon hir heed.
 Hir hosen weren of fyn scarlet reed,
 Ful streite y-teyd, and shoos ful moiste and newe.
 Bold was hir face, and fair, and reed of hewe.
 She was a worthy womman al hir lyve,

Housbondes at chirche-dore she hadde fyve,
 Withouten other companye in youthe;
 But therof nedeth nat to speke as nouthe.
 And thryes hadde she been at Ierusalem;
 She hadde passed many a straunge stroom;
 At Rome she hadde been, and at Boloigne,
 In Galice at seint Iame, and at Coloigne.
 She coude muche of wandring by the weye.
 Gat-tothed was she, soothly for to seye.
 Up-on an amblere esily she sat,
 Y-wimpled wel, and on hir heed an hat
 As brood as is a bokeler or a targe;
 A foot-mantel aboute hir hipes large,
 And on hir feet a paire of spores sharpe.
 In felawschip wel coude she laughe and carpe.
 Of remedyes of love she knew per-chaunce,
 For she coude of that art the olde daunce.

Persoun.

A good man was ther of religioun,
 And was a povre Persoun of a toun;
 But riche he was of holy thought and werk.
 He was also a lerned man, a clerk,
 That Cristes gospel trewely wolde preche;
 His parisshe devoutly wolde he teche.
 Benigne he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversitee ful pacient;
 And swich he was y-preved ofte sythes.
 Ful looth were him to cursen for his tythes,
 But rather wolde he yeven, out of doute,
 Un-to his povre parisshe aboute
 Of his offring, and eek of his substaunce.
 He coude in litel thing han suffisaunce.
 Wyd was his parisshe, and houses fer a-sonder,
 But he ne lafte nat, for reyn ne thonder,
 In siknes nor in meschief, to visyte
 The ferreste in his parisshe, muche and lyte,
 Up-on his feet, and in his hand a staf.
 This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf,
 That first he wroghte, and afterward he taughte;
 Out of the gospel he tho wordes caughte;
 And this figure he added eek ther-to,
 That if gold ruste, what shal iren do?
 For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
 No wonder is a lewed man to ruste;
 And shame it is, if a preest take keep,
 A shiten shepherde and a clene sheep.
 Wel oghte a preest ensample for to yive,
 By his clenness, how that his sheep shold live.
 He sette nat his benefice to hyre,
 And leet his sheep encombred in the myre,
 And ran to London, un-to sēynt Poules,
 To seken him a chaunterie for soules,
 Or with a bretherhed to been withholde;
 But dwelte at hoom, and kepte wel his folde,
 So that the wolf ne made it nat miscarie;

He was a shepherde and no mercenarie.
 And though he holy were, and vertuous,
 He was to sinful man nat despitous,
 Ne of his speche daungerous ne digne,
 But in his teching discreet and benigne.
 To drawn folk to heven by fairnesse
 By good ensample, was his businessse:
 But it were any persone obstinat,
 What-so he were, of heigh or lowe estat,
 Him wolde he snibben sharply for the nones.
 A bettre preest, I trowe that nowher noon is.
 He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
 Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
 But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taughte, and first he folwed it him-selve.

Plowman.

With him ther was a Plowman, was his brother,
 That hadde y-lad of dong ful many a fother,
 A trewe swinker and a good was he,
 Livinge in pees and parfit charitee.
 God loved he best with al his hole herte
 At alle tymes, thogh him gamed or smerte,
 And thanne his neighebour right as him-selve.
 He wolde thresshe, and ther-to dyke and delve,
 For Cristes sake, for every povre wight,
 Withouten hyre, if it lay in his might.
 His tythes payed he ful faire and wel,
 Bothe of his propre swink and his catel.
 In a tabard he rood upon a mere.
 Ther was also a Reve and a Millere,
 A Somnour and a Pardoner also,
 A Maunciple, and my-self; ther were namo.

Miller.

The Miller was a stout carl, for the nones,
 Ful big he was of braun, and eek of bones;
 That proved wel, for over-al ther he cam,
 At wrastling he wolde have alwey the ram.
 He was short-sholdred, brood, a thikke knarre,
 Ther nas no dore that he nolde heve of harre,
 Or breke it, at a renning, with his heed.
 His berd as any sowe or fox was reed,
 And ther-to brood, as though it were a spade.
 Up-on the cop right of his nose he hade
 A werte, and ther-on stood a tuft of heres,
 Reed as the bristles of a sowes eres;
 His nose-thirles blake were and wyde.
 A swerd and bokeler bar he by his syde;
 His mouth as greet was as a greet forneys.
 He was a Ianglere and a goliardeys,
 And that was most of sinne and harlotryes.
 Wel coude he stelen corn, and tollen thryes;
 And yet he hadde a thombe of gold, pardee.
 A whyt cote and a blew hood wered he.
 A baggepype wel coude he blowe and sowne,
 And ther-with-al he broghte us out of towne.

Maunciple.

A gentil Maunciple was ther of a temple,
 Of which achatours mighte take exemple
 For to be wyse in bying of vitaille.
 For whether that he payde, or took by taille,
 Algate he wayted so in his achat,
 That he was ay biforn and in good stat.
 Now is nat that of God a ful fair grace,
 That swich a lewed mannes wit shal pace
 The wisdom of an heap of lerned men?
 Of maistres hadde he mo than thryes ten,
 That were of lawe expert and curious;
 Of which ther were a doseyn in that hous,
 Worthy to been stiwardes of rente and lond
 Of any lord that is in Engeland,
 To make him live by his propre good,
 In honour dettelees, but he were wood,
 Or live as scarsly as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen al a shire
 In any cas that mighte falle or happe;
 And yit this maunciple sette hir aller cappe.

Reve.

The Reve was a sclendre colerik man,
 His berd was shave as ny as ever he can.
 His heer was by his eres round y-shorn.
 His top was dokked lyk a preest biforn.
 Ful longe were his legges, and ful lene,
 Y-lyk a staf, ther was no calf y-sene.
 Wel coude he kepe a gerner and a binne;
 Ther was noon auditour coude on him winne.
 Wel wiste he, by the droghte, and by the reyn,
 The yelding of his seed, and of his greyn.
 His lordes sheep, his neet, his dayerye,
 His swyn, his hors, his stoor, and his pultrye,
 Was hoolly in this reve's governing,
 And by his covenaut yaf the rekenyng,
 Sin that his lord was twenty yeer of age;
 Ther coude no man bringe him in arrerage.
 Ther nas baillif, ne herde, ne other hyne,
 That he ne knew his sleighte and his covyneye;
 They were adrad of him, as of the deeth.
 His wonyng was ful fair up-on an heeth,
 With grene treës shadwed was his place.
 He coude better than his lord purchace.
 Ful riche he was astored prively,
 His lord wel coude he plesen subtilly,
 To yeve and lene him of his owne good,
 And have a thank, and yet a cote and hood.
 In youthe he lerned hadde a good mister;
 He was a wel good wrighte, a carpenter.
 This reve sat up-on a ful good stot,
 That was al pomely grey, and highte Scot.
 A long surcote of pers up-on he hade,
 And by his syde he bar a rusty blade.
 Of Northfolk was this reve, of which I telle,

Bisyde a toun men clepen Baldeswelle.
 Tukked he was, as is a frere, aboute,
 And ever he rood the hindreste of our route.

Somnour.

A Somnour was ther with us in that place,
 That hadde a fyr-reed cherubannes face,
 For sawcefleem he was, with eyen narwe.
 As hoot he was, and lecherous, as a sparwe;
 With scalled browes blake, and piled berd;
 Of his visage children were aferd.
 Ther nas quik-silver, litarge, ne brimston,
 Boras, ceruce, ne oille of tartre noon,
 Ne oynement that wolde dense and byte,
 That him mighte helpen of his whelkes whyte,
 Nor of the knobbes sittinge on his chekes.
 Wel loved he garleek, oynons, and eek lekes,
 And for to drinken strong wyn, reed as blood.
 Thanne wolde he speke, and crye as he were wood.
 And whan that he wel dronken hadde the wyn,
 Than wolde he speke no word but Latyn.
 A fewe termes hadde he, two or three,
 That he had lerned out of som decree;
 No wonder is, he herde it al the day;
 And eek ye knowen wel, how that a lay
 Can clepen 'Watte,' as well as can the pope.
 But who-so coude in other thing him grope,
 Thanne hadde he spent al his philosophye;
 Ay '*Questio quid iuris*' wolde he crye.
 He was a gentil harlot and a kinde;
 A bettre felawe sholde men noght finde.
 He wolde suffre, for a quart of wyn,
 A good felawe to have his concubyn
 A twelf-month, and excuse him atte fulle:
 Ful prively a finch eek coude he pulle.
 And if he fond o-wher a good felawe,
 He wolde techen him to have non awe,
 In swich cas, of the erchedeknes curs,
 But-if a mannes soule were in his purs;
 For in his purs he sholde y-punished be.
 'Purs is the erchedeknes helle,' seyde he.
 But wel I woot he lyed right in dede;
 Of cursing oghte ech gilty man him drede—
 For curs wol slee, right as assoilling saveth—
 And also war him of a *significavit*.
 In daunger hadde he at his owne gyse
 The yonge girles of the diocyse,
 And knew hir counseil, and was al hir reed.
 A gerland hadde he set up-on his heed,
 As greet as it were for an ale-stake;
 A bokeler hadde he maad him of a cake.

Pardoner.

With him ther rood a gentil Pardoner
 Of Rouncival, his freend and his compeer,
 That streight was comen fro the court of Rome.
 Ful loude he song, 'Com hider, love, to me.'

This somnour bar to him a stif burdoun,
 Was never trompe of half so greet a soun.
 This pardoner hadde heer as yelow as wex,
 But smothe it heng, as dooth a strike of flex;
 By ounces henge his lokkes that he hadde,
 And ther-with he his shuldres overspradde;
 But thinne it lay, by colpons oon and oon;
 But hood, for Iolitee, ne wered he noon,
 For it was trussed up in his walet.
 Him thoughte, he rood al of the newe Iet;
 Dischevele, save his cappe, he rood al bare.
 Swiche glaringe eyen hadde he as an hare.
 A vernicle hadde he sowed on his cappe.
 His walet lay biforn him in his lappe,
 Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot.
 A voys he hadde as smal as hath a goot.
 No berd hadde he, ne never sholde have,
 As smothe it was as it were late y-shave;
 I trowe he were a gelding or a mare.
 But of his craft, fro Berwik into Ware,
 Ne was ther swich another pardoner.
 For in his male he hadde a pilwe-beer,
 Which that, he seyde, was our lady veyl:
 He seyde, he hadde a gobet of the seyl
 That sēynt Peter hadde, whan that he wente
 Up-on the see, til Iesu Crist him hente.
 He hadde a croys of latoun, ful of stones,
 And in a glas he hadde pigges bones.
 But with thise relikes, whan that he fond
 A povre person dwelling up-on lond,
 Up-on a day he gat him more moneye
 Than that the person gat in monthes tweye.
 And thus, with feyned flaterye and Iapes,
 He made the person and the peple his apes.
 But trewely to tellen, atte laste,
 He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste.
 Wel coude he rede a lessoun or a storie,
 But alderbest he song an offertorie;
 For wel he wiste, whan that song was songe,
 He moste preche, and wel affyle his tonge,
 To winne silver, as he ful wel coude;
 Therefore he song so meriely and loude.
 Now have I told you shortly, in a clause,
 Thestat, tharray, the nombre, and eek the cause
 Why that assembled was this companye
 In Southwerk, at this gentil hostelrye,
 That highte the Tabard, faste by the Belle.
 But now is tyme to yow for to telle
 How that we baren us that ilke night,
 Whan we were in that hostelrye alight.
 And after wol I telle of our viage,
 And al the remenaunt of our pilgrimage.
 But first I pray yow, of your curteisye,
 That ye narette it nat my vileinye,
 Thogh that I pleyedly speke in this matere,

To telle yow hir wordes and hir chere;
Ne thogh I speke hir wordes properly.
For this ye knowen al-so wel as I,
Who-so shal telle a tale after a man,
He moot reherce, as ny as ever he can,
Everich a word, if it be in his charge,
Al speke he never so rudeliche and large;
Or elles he moot telle his tale untrewē,
Or feyne thing, or finde wordes newe.
He may nat spare, al-thogh he were his brother;
He moot as wel seye o word as another.
Crist spak him-self ful brode in holy writ,
And wel ye woot, no vileinye is it.
Eek Plato seith, who-so that can him rede,
The wordes mote be cosin to the dede.
Also I prey yow to foryeve it me,
Al have I nat set folk in hir degree
Here in this tale, as that they sholde stonde;
My wit is short, ye may wel understonde.
Greet chere made our hoste us everichon,
And to the soper sette he us anon;
And served us with vitaille at the beste.
Strong was the wyn, and wel to drinke us leste.
A semely man our hoste was with-alle
For to han been a marshal in an halle;
A large man he was with eyen stepe,
A fairer burgeys is ther noon in Chepe:
Bold of his speche, and wys, and wel y-taught,
And of manhod him lakkede right naught.
Eek therto he was right a mery man,
And after soper pleyen he bigan,
And spak of mirthe amonges othere thinges,
Whan that we hadde maad our rekeninges;
And seyde thus: 'Now, lordinges, trewely,
Ye been to me right welcome hertely:
For by my trouthe, if that I shal nat lye,
I ne saugh this yeer so mery a companye
At ones in this herberwe as is now.
Fayn wolde I doon yow mirthe, wiste I how.
And of a mirthe I am right now bithoght,
To doon yow ese, and it shal coste noght.
Ye goon to Caunterbury; God yow spede,
The blisful martir quyte yow your mede.
And wel I woot, as ye goon by the weye,
Ye shapen yow to talen and to pleye;
For trewely, confort ne mirthe is noon
To ryde by the weye doumb as a stoon;
And therfore wol I maken yow disport,
As I seyde erst, and doon yow som confort.
And if yow lyketh alle, by oon assent,
Now for to stonden at my Iugement,
And for to werken as I shal yow seye,
To-morwe, whan ye ryden by the weye,
Now, by my fader soule, that is deed,
But ye be merye, I wol yeve yow myn heed.

Hold up your hond, withouten more speche.'
 Our counseil was nat longe for to seche;
 Us thoughte it was noght worth to make it wys,
 And graunted him withouten more avys,
 And bad him seye his verdict, as him leste.
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'now herkneth for the beste;
 But tak it not, I prey yow, in desdeyn;
 This is the poynt, to speken short and pleyn,
 That ech of yow, to shorte with your weye,
 In this viage, shal telle tales tweye,
 To Caunterbury-ward, I mene it so,
 And hom-ward he shal tellen othere two,
 Of adventures that whylom han bifalle.
 And which of yow that bereth him best of alle,
 That is to seyn, that telleth in this cas
 Tales of best sentence and most solas,
 Shal have a soper at our aller cost
 Here in this place, sitting by this post,
 Whan that we come agayn fro Caunterbury.
 And for to make yow the more mery,
 I wol my-selven gladly with yow ryde,
 Right at myn owne cost, and be your gyde.
 And who-so wol my Iugement withseye
 Shal paye al that we spenden by the weye.
 And if ye vouche-sauf that it be so,
 Tel me anon, with-outen wordes mo,
 And I wol erly shape me therfore.'
 This thing was graunted, and our othes swore
 With ful glad herte, and preyden him also
 That he wold vouche-sauf for to do so,
 And that he wolde been our governour,
 And of our tales Iuge and reportour,
 And sette a soper at a certeyn prys;
 And we wold reuled been at his devys,
 In heigh and lowe; and thus, by oon assent,
 We been acorded to his Iugement.
 And ther-up-on the wyn was fet anon;
 We dronken, and to reste wente echon,
 With-outen any lenger taryinge.
 A-morwe, whan that day bigan to springe,
 Up roos our host, and was our aller cok,
 And gadrede us togidre, alle in a flok,
 And forth we riden, a litel more than pas,
 Un-to the watering of seint Thomas.
 And there our host bigan his hors areste,
 And seyde; 'Lordinges, herkneth, if yow leste.
 Ye woot your forward, and I it yow recorde.
 If even-song and morwe-song acorde,
 Lat se now who shal telle the firste tale.
 As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,
 Who-so be rebel to my Iugement
 Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent.
 Now draweth cut, er that we ferrer twinne;
 He which that hath the shortest shal biginne.
 Sire knight,' quod he, 'my maister and my lord,

Now draweth cut, for that is myn acord.
 Cometh neer,' quod he, 'my lady prioresse;
 And ye, sir clerk, lat be your shamfastnesse,
 Ne studieth noght; ley hond to, every man.'
 Anon to drawen every wight bigan,
 And shortly for to tellen, as it was,
 Were it by aventure, or sort, or cas,
 The sothe is this, the cut fil to the knight,
 Of which ful blythe and glad was every wight;
 And telle he moste his tale, as was resoun,
 By forward and by composicioun,
 As ye han herd; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And whan this gode man saugh it was so,
 As he that wys was and obedient
 To kepe his forward by his free assent,
 He seyde: 'Sin I shal biginne the game,
 What, welcome be the cut, a Goddes name!
 Now lat us ryde, and herkneth what I seye.'
 And with that word we riden forth our weye;
 And he bigan with right a mery chere
 His tale anon, and seyde in this manere.
Here endeth the prolog of this book; and here biginneth the first tale, which is the Knightes Tale.

THE KNIGHTES TALE.

*Iamque domos patrias, Scithice post aspera gentis
 Prelia, laurigero, &c.*

Whylom, as olde stories tellen us,
 Ther was a duk that highte Theseus;
 Of Athenes he was lord and governour,
 And in his tyme swich a conquerour,
 That gretter was ther noon under the sonne.
 Ful many a riche contree hadde he wonne;
 What with his wisdom and his chivalrye,
 He conquered al the regne of Femenye,
 That whylom was y-cleped Scithia;
 And weddede the quene Ipolita,
 And broghte hir hoom with him in his contree
 With muchel glorie and greet solempnitee,
 And eek hir yonge suster Emelye.
 And thus with victorie and with melodye
 Lete I this noble duk to Athenes ryde,
 And al his hoost, in armes, him bisyde.
 And certes, if it nere to long to here,
 I wolde han told yow fully the manere,
 How wonnen was the regne of Femenye
 By Theseus, and by his chivalrye;
 And of the grete bataille for the nones
 Bitwixen Athenës and Amazones;
 And how asseged was Ipolita,
 The faire hardy quene of Scithia;
 And of the feste that was at hir weddinge,
 And of the tempest at hir hoom-cominge;
 But al that thing I moot as now forbere.

I have, God woot, a large feeld to ere,
 And wayke been the oxen in my plough.
 The remenant of the tale is long y-nough.
 I wol nat letten eek noon of this route;
 Lat every felawe telle his tale aboute,
 And lat see now who shal the soper winne;
 And ther I lefte, I wol ageyn biginne.
 This duk, of whom I make menciouun,
 When he was come almost unto the toun,
 In al his wele and in his moste pryde,
 He was war, as he caste his eye asyde,
 Wher that ther kneled in the hye weye
 A companye of ladies, tweye and tweye,
 Ech after other, clad in clothes blake;
 But swich a cry and swich a wo they make,
 That in this world nis creature livinge,
 That herde swich another weymentinge;
 And of this cry they nolde never stenten,
 Til they the reynes of his brydel henten.
 'What folk ben ye, that at myn hoom-cominge
 Perturben so my feste with cryinge?'
 Quod Theseus, 'have ye so greet envye
 Of myn honour, that thus compleyne and crye?
 Or who hath yow misboden, or offended?
 And telleth me if it may been amended;
 And why that ye ben clothed thus in blak?'
 The eldest lady of hem alle spak,
 When she hadde swowned with a deedly chere,
 That it was routhe for to seen and here,
 And seyde: 'Lord, to whom Fortune hath yiven
 Victorie, and as a conquerour to liven,
 Noght greveth us your glorie and your honour;
 But we biseken mercy and socour.
 Have mercy on our wo and our distresse.
 Som drope of pitee, thurgh thy gentillesse,
 Up-on us wrecched wommen lat thou falle.
 For certes, lord, ther nis noon of us alle,
 That she nath been a duchesse or a quene;
 Now be we caitifs, as it is wel sene:
 Thanked be Fortune, and hir false wheel,
 That noon estat assureth to be weel.
 And certes, lord, to abyden your presence,
 Here in the temple of the goddessse Clemence
 We han ben waytinge al this fourtenight;
 Now help us, lord, sith it is in thy might.
 I wrecche, which that wepe and waille thus,
 Was whylom wyf to king Capaneus,
 That starf at Thebes, cursed be that day!
 And alle we, that been in this array,
 And maken al this lamentacioun,
 We losten alle our housbondes at that toun,
 Whyl that the sege ther-aboute lay.
 And yet now the olde Creon, weylaway!
 That lord is now of Thebes the citee,
 Fulfild of ire and of iniquitee,

He, for despyt, and for his tyrannye,
To do the dede bodyes vileinye,
Of alle our lordes, whiche that ben slawe,
Hath alle the bodyes on an heep y-drawe,
And wol nat suffren hem, by noon assent,
Neither to been y-buried nor y-brent,
But maketh houndes ete hem in despyt.
And with that word, with-uten more respyt,
They fillen gruf, and cryden pitously,
'Have on us wrecched wommen som mercy,
And lat our sorwe sinken in thyn herte.'
This gentil duk down from his courser sterte
With herte pitous, whan he herde hem speke.
Him thoughte that his herte wolde breke,
Whan he saugh hem so pitous and so mat,
That whylom weren of so greet estat.
And in his armes he hem alle up hente,
And hem conforteth in ful good entente;
And swoor his ooth, as he was trewe knight,
He wolde doon so ferforthly his might
Up-on the tyraunt Creon hem to wreke,
That al the peple of Grece sholde speke
How Creon was of Theseus y-served,
As he that hadde his deeth ful wel deserved.
And right anoon, with-uten more abood,
His baner he displayeth, and forth rood
To Thebes-ward, and al his host bisyde;
No neer Athenës wolde he go ne ryde,
Ne take his ese fully half a day,
But onward on his wey that night he lay;
And sente anoon Ipolita the quene,
And Emelye hir yonge suster shene,
Un-to the toun of Athenës to dwelle;
And forth he rit; ther nis namore to telle.
The rede statue of Mars, with spere and targe,
So shyneth in his whyte baner large,
That alle the feeldes gliteren up and down;
And by his baner born is his penoun
Of gold ful riche, in which ther was y-bete
The Minotaur, which that he slough in Crete.
Thus rit this duk, thus rit this conquerour,
And in his host of chivalrye the flour,
Til that he cam to Thebes, and alighte
Faire in a feeld, ther as he thoghte fighte.
But shortly for to speken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He faught, and slough him manly as a knight
In pleyn bataille, and putte the folk to flight;
And by assaut he wan the citee after,
And rente adoun bothe wal, and sparre, and rafter;
And to the ladyes he restored agayn
The bones of hir housbondes that were slayn,
To doon obsequies, as was tho the gyse.
But it were al to long for to devyse
The grete clamour and the waymentinge

That the ladyes made at the brenninge
 Of the bodyes, and the grete honour
 That Theseus, the noble conquerour,
 Doth to the ladyes, whan they from him wente;
 But shortly for to telle is myn entente.
 Whan that this worthy duk, this Theseus,
 Hath Creon slayn, and wonne Thebes thus,
 Stille in that feeld he took al night his reste,
 And dide with al the contree as him leste.
 To ransake in the tas of bodyes dede,
 Hem for to strepe of harneys and of wede,
 The pilours diden bisnesse and cure,
 After the bataille and disconfiture.
 And so bifel, that in the tas they founde,
 Thurgh-girt with many a grevous bloody wounde,
 Two yonge knightes ligging by and by,
 Bothe in oon armes, wroght ful richely,
 Of whiche two, Arcita hight that oon,
 And that other knight hight Palamon.
 Nat fully quike, ne fully dede they were,
 But by hir cote-armures, and by hir gere,
 The heraudes knewe hem best in special,
 As they that weren of the blood royal
 Of Thebes, and of sustren two y-born.
 Out of the tas the pilours han hem torn,
 And han hem caried softe un-to the tente
 Of Theseus, and he ful sone hem sente
 To Athenēs, to dwellen in prisoun
 Perpetuelly, he nolde no raunsoun.
 And whan this worthy duk hath thus y-don,
 He took his host, and hoom he rood anon
 With laurer crowned as a conquerour;
 And there he liveth, in loye and in honour,
 Terme of his lyf; what nedeth wordes mo?
 And in a tour, in angwish and in wo,
 Dwellen this Palamoun and eek Arcite,
 For evermore, ther may no gold hem quyte.
 This passeth yeer by yeer, and day by day,
 Til it fil ones, in a morwe of May,
 That Emelye, that fairer was to sene
 Than is the lilie upon his stalke grene,
 And fressher than the May with floures newe—
 For with the rose colour stroof hir hewe,
 I noot which was the fairer of hem two—
 Er it were day, as was hir wone to do,
 She was arisen, and al redy dight;
 For May wol have no slogardye a-night.
 The sesoun priketh every gentil herte,
 And maketh him out of his sleep to sterte,
 And seith, 'Arys, and do thyn observaunce.'
 This maked Emelye have remembraunce
 To doon honour to May, and for to ryse.
 Y-clothed was she fresh, for to devyse;
 Hir yelow heer was broyded in a tresse,
 Bihinde hir bak, a yerde long, I gesse.

And in the gardin, at the sonne up-riste,
She walketh up and down, and as hir liste
She gadereth floures, party whyte and rede,
To make a sotel gerland for hir hede,
And as an aungel hevenly she song.
The grete tour, that was so thikke and strong,
Which of the castel was the chief dongeoun,
(Ther-as the knightes weren in prisoun,
Of whiche I tolde yow, and tellen shal)
Was evene Ioynant to the gardin-wal,
Ther as this Emelye hadde hir pleyng.
Bright was the sonne, and cleer that morweninge,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wone, by leve of his gayler,
Was risen, and romed in a chambre on heigh,
In which he al the noble citee seigh,
And eek the gardin, ful of braunches grene,
Ther-as this fresshe Emelye the shene
Was in hir walk, and romed up and down.
This sorweful prisoner, this Palamoun,
Goth in the chambre, roming to and fro,
And to him-self compleyning of his wo;
That he was born, ful ofte he seyde, 'alas!'
And so bifel, by aventure or cas,
That thurgh a window, thikke of many a barre
Of yren greet, and square as any sparre,
He caste his eye upon Emelya,
And ther-with-al he bleynte, and cryde 'a!'
As though he stongen were un-to the herte.
And with that cry Arcite anon up-sterste,
And seyde, 'Cosin myn, what eyleth thee,
That art so pale and deedly on to see?
Why crydestow? who hath thee doon offence?
For Goddes love, tak al in pacience
Our prisoun, for it may non other be;
Fortune hath yeven us this adversitee.
Som wikke aspect or disposicioun
Of Saturne, by sum constellacioun,
Hath yeven us this, al-though we hadde it sworn;
So stood the heven whan that we were born;
We moste endure it: this is the short and pleyn.'
This Palamon answerde, and seyde ageyn,
'Cosyn, for sothe, of this opinioun
Thou hast a veyn imaginacioun.
This prison caused me nat for to crye.
But I was hurt right now thurgh-out myn yë
In-to myn herte, that wol my bane be.
The fairnesse of that lady that I see
Yond in the gardin romen to and fro,
Is cause of al my crying and my wo.
I noot wher she be womman or goddesse;
But Venus is it, soothly, as I gesse.'
And ther-with-al on kneës down he fil,
And seyde: 'Venus, if it be thy wil
Yow in this gardin thus to transfigure

Bifore me, sorweful wrecche creature,
 Out of this prisoun help that we may scapen.
 And if so be my destinee be shapen
 By eterne word to dyen in prisoun,
 Of our linage have som compassioun,
 That is so lowe y-brought by tirannye.
 And with that word Arcite gan espye
 Wher-as this lady romed to and fro.
 And with that sighte hir beautee hurte him so,
 That, if that Palamon was wounded sore,
 Arcite is hurt as muche as he, or more.
 And with a sigh he seyde pitously:
 'The fresshe beautee sleeth me sodeynly
 Of hir that rometh in the yonder place;
 And, but I have hir mercy and hir grace,
 That I may seen hir atte leeste weye,
 I nam but deed; ther nis namore to seye.'
 This Palamon, whan he tho wordes herde,
 Dispitously he loked, and answerde:
 'Whether seistow this in earnest or in pley?'
 'Nay,' quod Arcite, 'in earnest, by my fey!
 God help me so, me list ful yvele pleye.'
 This Palamon gan knitte his browes tweye:
 'It nere,' quod he, 'to thee no greet honour
 For to be fals, ne for to be traytour
 To me, that am thy cosin and thy brother
 Y-sworn ful depe, and ech of us til other,
 That never, for to dyen in the peyne,
 Til that the deeth departe shal us tweyne,
 Neither of us in love to hindren other,
 Ne in non other cas, my leve brother;
 But that thou sholdest trewely forthren me
 In every cas, and I shal forthren thee.
 This was thyn ooth, and myn also, certeyn;
 I wot right wel, thou darst it nat withseyn.
 Thus artow of my counseil, out of doute.
 And now thou woldest falsly been aboute
 To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
 And ever shal, til that myn herte sterve.
 Now certes, fals Arcite, thou shalt nat so.
 I loved hir first, and tolde thee my wo
 As to my counseil, and my brother sworn
 To forthre me, as I have told biforn.
 For which thou art y-bounden as a knight
 To helpen me, if it lay in thy might,
 Or elles artow fals, I dar wel seyn.'
 This Arcitë ful proudly spak ageyn,
 'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather fals than I;
 But thou art fals, I telle thee utterly;
 For *par amour* I loved hir first er thow.
 What wiltow seyn? thou wistest nat yet now
 Whether she be a womman or goddessse!
 Thyn is affeccioun of holinesse,
 And myn is love, as to a creature;
 For which I tolde thee myn aventure

As to my cosin, and my brother sworn.
I pose, that thou lovedest hir biforn;
Wostow nat wel the olde clerkes sawe,
That 'who shal yeve a lover any lawe?'
Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,
Than may be yeve to any erthly man.
And therefore positif lawe and swich decree
Is broke al-day for love, in ech degree.
A man moot nedes love, maugree his heed.
He may nat fleen it, thogh he sholde be deed,
Al be she mayde, or widwe, or elles wyf.
And eek it is nat lykly, al thy lyf,
To stonden in hir grace; namore shal I;
For wel thou woost thy-selven, verrailly,
That thou and I be dampned to prisoun
Perpetuelly; us gayneth no raunsoun.
We stryve as dide the houndes for the boon,
They foughte al day, and yet hir part was noon;
Ther cam a kyte, whyl that they were wrothe,
And bar away the boon bitwixe hem bothe.
And therfore, at the kinges court, my brother,
Ech man for him-self, ther is non other.
Love if thee list; for I love and ay shal;
And soothly, leve brother, this is al.
Here in this prisoun mote we endure,
And everich of us take his aventure.'
Greet was the stryf and long bitwixe hem tweye,
If that I hadde leyser for to seye;
But to theeffect. It happed on a day,
(To telle it yow as shortly as I may)
A worthy duk that highte Perotheus,
That felawe was un-to duk Theseus
Sin thilke day that they were children lyte,
Was come to Athenes, his felawe to visyte,
And for to pleye, as he was wont to do,
For in this world he loved no man so:
And he loved him as tendrely ageyn.
So wel they loved, as olde bokes seyn,
That whan that oon was deed, sothly to telle,
His felawe wente and soghte him doun in helle;
But of that story list me nat to wryte.
Duk Perotheus loved wel Arcite,
And hadde him knowe at Thebes yeer by yere;
And fynally, at requeste and preyere
Of Perotheus, with-oute any raunsoun,
Duk Theseus him leet out of prisoun,
Freely to goon, wher that him liste over-al,
In swich a gyse, as I you tellen shal.
This was the forward, pleyedly for tendyte,
Bitwixen Theseus and him Arcite:
That if so were, that Arcite were y-founde
Ever in his lyf, by day or night or stounde
In any contree of this Theseus,
And he were caught, it was acorded thus,
That with a swerd he sholde lese his heed;

Ther nas non other remedye ne reed,
 But taketh his leve, and homward he him spedde;
 Let him be war, his nekke lyth to wedde!
 How greet a sorwe suffreth now Arcite!
 The deeth he feleth thurgh his herte smyte;
 He wepeth, wayleth, cryeth pitously;
 To sleen him-self he wayteth prively.
 He seyde, 'Allas that day that I was born!
 Now is my prison worse than biforn;
 Now is me shape eternally to dwelle
 Noght in purgatorie, but in helle.
 Allas! that ever knew I Perotheus!
 For elles hadde I dwelled with Theseus
 Y-fetered in his prisoun ever-mo.
 Than hadde I been in blisse, and nat in wo.
 Only the sighte of hir, whom that I serve,
 Though that I never hir grace may deserve,
 Wolde han suffised right y-nough for me.
 O dere cosin Palamon,' quod he,
 'Thyn is the victorie of this aventure,
 Ful blisfully in prison maistow dure;
 In prison? certes nay, but in paradys!
 Wel hath fortune y-turned thee the dys,
 That hast the sighte of hir, and I thabsence.
 For possible is, sin thou hast hir presence,
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
 That by som cas, sin fortune is chaungeable,
 Thou mayst to thy desyr som-tyme atteyne.
 But I, that am exyled, and bareyne
 Of alle grace, and in so greet despeir,
 That ther nis erthe, water, fyr, ne eir,
 Ne creature, that of hem maked is,
 That may me helpe or doon confort in this.
 Wel oughte I sterve in wanhope and distresse;
 Farwel my lyf, my lust, and my gladnesse!
 Allas, why pleynen folk so in commune
 Of purveyaunce of God, or of fortune,
 That yeveth hem ful ofte in many a gyse
 Wel bettre than they can hem-self devyse?
 Som man desyreth for to han richesse,
 That cause is of his mordre or greet siknesse.
 And som man wolde out of his prison fayn,
 That in his hous is of his meynee slayn.
 Infinite harmes been in this matere;
 We witen nat what thing we preyen here.
 We faren as he that dronke is as a mous;
 A dronke man wot wel he hath an hous,
 But he noot which the righte wey is thider;
 And to a dronke man the wey is slider.
 And certes, in this world so faren we;
 We seken faste after felicitee,
 But we goon wrong ful often, trewely.
 Thus may we seyen alle, and namely I,
 That wende and hadde a greet opinioun,
 That, if I mighte escapen from prisoun,

Than hadde I been in loye and perfit hele,
Ther now I am exyled fro my wele.
Sin that I may nat seen yow, Emelye,
I nam but deed; ther nis no remedye.'
Up-on that other syde Palamon,
Whan that he wiste Arcite was agon,
Swich sorwe he maketh, that the grete tour
Resouneth of his youling and clamour.
The pure fettres on his shines grete
Weren of his bittre salte teres wete.
'Allas!' quod he, 'Arcita, cosin myn,
Of al our stryf, God woot, the fruyt is thyn.
Thow walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my wo thou yevest litel charge.
Thou mayst, sin thou hast wisdom and manhede,
Assemblen alle the folk of our kinrede,
And make a werre so sharp on this citee,
That by som aventure, or som tretee,
Thou mayst have hir to lady and to wyf,
For whom that I mot nedes lese my lyf.
For, as by wey of possibilitee,
Sith thou art at thy large, of prison free,
And art a lord, greet is thyn avauntage,
More than is myn, that sterve here in a cage.
For I mot wepe and wayle, whyl I live,
With al the wo that prison may me yive,
And eek with peyne that love me yiveth also,
That doubleth al my torment and my wo.'
Ther-with the fyr of Ielousye up-sterde
With-inne his brest, and hente him by the herte
So woodly, that he lyk was to biholde
The box-tree, or the asshen dede and colde.
Tho seyde he; 'O cruel goddes, that governe
This world with binding of your word eterne,
And wryten in the table of athamaunt
Your parlement, and your eterne graunt,
What is mankinde more un-to yow holde
Than is the sheep, that rouketh in the folde?
For slayn is man right as another beste,
And dwelleth eek in prison and areste,
And hath siknesse, and greet adversitee,
And ofte tymes giltelees, pardee!
What governaunce is in this prescience,
That giltelees tormenteth innocence?
And yet encreseth this al my penaunce,
That man is bounden to his observaunce,
For Goddes sake, to letten of his wille,
Ther as a beest may al his lust fulfille.
And whan a beest is deed, he hath no peyne;
But man after his deeth moot wepe and pleyne,
Though in this world he have care and wo:
With-outen doute it may stonden so.
The answeere of this I lete to divynis,
But wel I woot, that in this world gret pyne is.
Allas! I see a serpent or a theef,

That many a trewe man hath doon mescheef,
 Goon at his large, and wher him list may turne.
 But I mot been in prison thurgh Saturne,
 And eek thurgh Iuno, Ialous and eek wood,
 That hath destroyed wel ny al the blood
 Of Thebes, with his waste walles wyde.
 And Venus sleeth me on that other syde
 For Ielousye, and fere of him Arcite.
 Now wol I stinte of Palamon a lyte,
 And lete him in his prison stille dwelle,
 And of Arcita forth I wol yow telle.
 The somer passeth, and the nightes longe
 Encresen double wyse the peynes stronge
 Bothe of the love and the prisoner.
 I noot which hath the wofullere mester.
 For shortly for to seyn, this Palamoun
 Perpetuely is dampned to prisoun,
 In cheynes and in fettres to ben deed;
 And Arcite is exyled upon his heed
 For ever-mo as out of that contree,
 Ne never-mo he shal his lady see.
 Yow loveres axe I now this questioun,
 Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamoun?
 That oon may seen his lady day by day,
 But in prison he moot dwelle alway.
 That other wher him list may ryde or go,
 But seen his lady shal he never-mo.
 Now demeth as yow liste, ye that can,
 For I wol telle forth as I bigan.

Explicit prima Pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

Whan that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
 Ful ofte a day he swelte and seyde 'allas,'
 For seen his lady shal he never-mo.
 And shortly to concluden al his wo,
 So mucche sorwe had never creature
 That is, or shal, whyl that the world may dure.
 His sleep, his mete, his drink is him biraft,
 That lene he wex, and drye as is a shaft.
 His eyen holwe, and grisly to biholde;
 His hewe falwe, and pale as asshen colde,
 And solitarie he was, and ever allone,
 And wailling al the night, making his mone.
 And if he herde song or instrument,
 Then wolde he wepe, he mighte nat be stent;
 So feble eek were his spirits, and so lowe,
 And chaunged so, that no man coude knowe
 His speche nor his vois, though men it herde.
 And in his gere, for al the world he ferde
 Nat oonly lyk the loveres maladye
 Of Hereos, but rather lyk manye
 Engendred of humour malencolyk,
 Biforen, in his celle fantasyk.
 And shortly, turned was al up-so-doun
 Bothe habit and eek disposicioun
 Of him, this woful love and daun Arcite.

What sholde I al-day of his wo endyte?
Whan he endured hadde a yeer or two
This cruel torment, and this peyne and wo,
At Thebes, in his contree, as I seyde,
Up-on a night, in sleep as he him leyde,
Him thoughte how that the winged god Mercurie
Biforn him stood, and bad him to be murye.
His slepy yerde in hond he bar uprighte;
An hat he werede up-on his heres brighte.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep)
As he was whan that Argus took his sleep;
And seyde him thus: 'To Athenes shaltou wende;
Ther is thee shapen of thy wo an ende.'
And with that word Arcite wook and sterte.
'Now trewely, how sore that me smerte,'
Quod he, 'to Athenes right now wol I fare;
Ne for the drede of deeth shal I nat spare
To see my lady, that I love and serve;
In hir presence I recche nat to sterve.'
And with that word he caughte a greet mirour,
And saugh that chaunged was al his colour,
And saugh his visage al in another kinde.
And right anoon it ran him in his minde,
That, sith his face was so disfigured
Of maladye, the which he hadde endured,
He mighte wel, if that he bar him lowe,
Live in Athenes ever-more unknowe,
And seen his lady wel ny day by day.
And right anon he chaunged his array,
And cladde him as a povre laborer,
And al allone, save oonly a squyer,
That knew his privetee and al his cas,
Which was disgysed povrely, as he was,
To Athenes is he goon the nexte way.
And to the court he wente up-on a day,
And at the gate he profreth his servyse,
To drugge and drawe, what so men wol devyse.
And shortly of this matere for to seyn,
He fil in office with a chamberleyn,
The which that dwelling was with Emelye.
For he was wys, and coude soon aspye
Of every servaunt, which that serveth here.
Wel coude he hewen wode, and water bere,
For he was yong and mighty for the nones,
And ther-to be was strong and big of bones
To doon that any wight can him devyse.
A yeer or two he was in this servyse,
Page of the chambre of Emelye the brighte;
And 'Philostrate' he seide that he highte.
But half so wel biloved a man as he
Ne was ther never in court, of his degree;
He was so gentil of condicioun,
That thurghout al the court was his renoun.
They seyden, that it were a charitee
That Theseus wolde enhauncen his degree,

And putten him in worshipful servyse,
 Ther as he mighte his vertu excercyse.
 And thus, with-inne a whyle, his name is spronge
 Bothe of his dedes, and his goode tonge,
 That Theseus hath taken him so neer
 That of his chambre he made him a squyer,
 And yaf him gold to mayntene his degree;
 And eek men broghte him out of his contree
 From yeer to yeer, ful prively, his rente;
 But honestly and slyly he it spente,
 That no man wondred how that he it hadde.
 And three yeer in this wyse his lyf he ladde,
 And bar him so in pees and eek in werre,
 Ther nas no man that Theseus hath derre.
 And in this blisse lete I now Arcite,
 And speke I wol of Palamon a lyte.
 In derknesse and horrible and strong prisoun
 This seven yeer hath seten Palamoun,
 Forpynd, what for wo and for distresse;
 Who feleth double soor and hevynesse
 But Palamon? that love destreyneth so,
 That wood out of his wit he gooth for wo;
 And eek therto he is a prisoner
 Perpetuelly, noght oonly for a yeer.
 Who coude ryme in English proprely
 His martirdom? for sothe, it am nat I;
 Therefore I passe as lightly as I may.
 It fel that in the seventhe yeer, in May,
 The thridde night, (as olde bokes seyn,
 That al this storie tellen more pleyn,)
 Were it by aventure or destinee,
 (As, whan a thing is shapen, it shal be.)
 That, sone after the midnight, Palamoun,
 By helping of a freend, brak his prisoun,
 And fleeth the citee, faste as he may go;
 For he had yive his gayler drinke so
 Of a clarree, maad of a certeyn wyn,
 With nercotikes and opie of Thebes fyn,
 That al that night, thogh that men wolde him shake,
 The gayler sleep, he mighte nat awake;
 And thus he fleeth as faste as ever he may.
 The night was short, and faste by the day,
 That nedes-cost he moste him-selven hyde,
 And til a grove, faste ther besyde,
 With dredful foot than stalketh Palamoun.
 For shortly, this was his opinioun,
 That in that grove he wolde him hyde al day,
 And in the night than wolde he take his way
 To Thebes-ward, his freendes for to preye
 On Theseus to helpe him to werreye;
 And shortly, outhur he wolde lese his lyf,
 Or winnen Emelye un-to his wyf;
 This is theeffect and his entente pleyn.
 Now wol I torne un-to Arcite ageyn,
 That litel wiste how ny that was his care,

Til that fortune had broght him in the snare.
The bisy larke, messenger of day,
Saluëth in hir song the morwe gray;
And fyry Phebus ryseth up so brighte,
That al the orient laugheth of the lighte,
And with his stremes dryeth in the greves
The silver dropes, hanging on the leues.
And Arcite, that is in the court royal
With Theseus, his squyer principal,
Is risen, and loketh on the myrie day.
And, for to doon his observaunce to May,
Remembring on the poynt of his desyr,
He on a courser, sterting as the fyr,
Is riden in-to the feeldes, him to pleye,
Out of the court, were it a myle or tweye;
And to the grove, of which that I yow tolde,
By aventure, his wey he gan to holde,
To maken him a gerland of the greves,
Were it of wodebinde or hawethorn-leues,
And loude he song ageyn the sonne shene:
'May, with alle thy floures and thy grene,
Wel-come be thou, faire fresshe May,
I hope that I som grene gete may.'
And from his courser, with a lusty herte,
In-to the grove ful hastily he sterte,
And in a path he rometh up and down,
Ther-as, by aventure, this Palamoun
Was in a bush, that no man mighte him see,
For sore afered of his deeth was he.
No-thing ne knew he that it was Arcite:
God wot he wolde have trowed it ful lyte.
But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many yeres,
That 'feeld hath eyen, and the wode hath eres.'
It is ful fair a man to bere him evene,
For al-day meteth men at unset stevene.
Ful litel woot Arcite of his felawe,
That was so ny to herknen al his sawe,
For in the bush he sitteth now ful stille.
Whan that Arcite had romed al his fille,
And songen al the roundel lustily,
In-to a studie he fil sodeynly,
As doon thise loveres in hir queynte geres,
Now in the crope, now down in the breres,
Now up, now down, as boket in a welle.
Right as the Friday, soothly for to telle,
Now it shyneth, now it reyneth faste,
Right so can gery Venus overcaste
The hertes of hir folk; right as hir day
Is gerful, right so chaungeth she array.
Selde is the Friday al the wyke y-lyke.
Whan that Arcite had songe, he gan to syke,
And sette him doun with-outen any more:
'Alas!' quod he, 'that day that I was bore!
How longe, Iuno, thurgh thy crueltee,
Woltow werreyen Thebes the citee?

Allas! y-brought is to confusioun
 The blood royal of Cadme and Amphioun;
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man
 That Thebes bulte, or first the toun bigan,
 And of the citee first was crowned king,
 Of his linage am I, and his of-spring
 By verray ligne, as of the stok royal:
 And now I am so caitif and so thral,
 That he, that is my mortal enemy,
 I serve him as his squyer povrely.
 And yet doth Iuno me wel more shame,
 For I dar noght biknowe myn owne name;
 But ther-as I was wont to highte Arcite,
 Now highte I Philostrate, noght worth a myte.
 Allas! thou felle Mars, allas! Iuno,
 Thus hath your ire our kinrede al fordo,
 Save only me, and wrecched Palamoun,
 That Theseus martyreth in prisoun.
 And over al this, to sleen me utterly,
 Love hath his fyry dart so brenningly
 Y-stiked thurgh my trewe careful herte,
 That shapen was my deeth erst than my sherte.
 Ye sleen me with your eyen, Emelye;
 Ye been the cause wherfor that I dye.
 Of al the remenant of myn other care
 Ne sette I nat the mountaunce of a tare,
 So that I coude don aught to your plesaunce!
 And with that word he fil down in a traunce
 A longe tyme; and after he up-sterter.
 This Palamoun, that thoughte that thurgh his herte
 He felte a cold swerd sodeynliche glyde,
 For ire he quook, no lenger wolde he byde.
 And whan that he had herd Arcites tale,
 As he were wood, with face deed and pale,
 He sterter him up out of the buskes thikke,
 And seyde: 'Arcite, false traitour wikke,
 Now artow hent, that lovest my lady so,
 For whom that I have al this peyne and wo,
 And art my blood, and to my counseil sworn,
 As I ful ofte have told thee heer-biforn,
 And hast by-iaped here duk Theseus,
 And falsly chaunged hast thy name thus;
 I wol be deed, or elles thou shalt dye.
 Thou shalt nat love my lady Emelye,
 But I wol love hir only, and namo;
 For I am Palamoun, thy mortal fo.
 And though that I no wepne have in this place,
 But out of prison am astert by grace,
 I drede noght that outhur thou shalt dye,
 Or thou ne shalt nat loven Emelye.
 Chees which thou wilt, for thou shalt nat asterte.'
 This Arcitë, with ful despitous herte,
 Whan he him knew, and hadde his tale herd,
 As fiers as leoun, pulled out a swerd,
 And seyde thus: 'by God that sit above,

Nere it that thou art sik, and wood for love,
And eek that thou no wepne hast in this place,
Thou sholdest never out of this grove pace,
That thou ne sholdest dyen of myn hond.
For I defye the seurtee and the bond
Which that thou seyst that I have maad to thee.
What, verray fool, think wel that love is free,
And I wol love hir, maugre al thy might!
But, for as muche thou art a worthy knight,
And wilnest to darreyne hir by batayle,
Have heer my trouthe, to-morwe I wol nat fayle,
With-outen witing of any other wight,
That here I wol be founden as a knight,
And bringen harneys right y-nough for thee;
And chees the beste, and leve the worste for me.
And mete and drinke this night wol I bringe
Y-nough for thee, and clothes for thy beddinge.
And, if so be that thou my lady winne,
And slee me in this wode ther I am inne,
Thou mayst wel have thy lady, as for me.'
This Palamon answerde: 'I graunte it thee.'
And thus they been departed til a-morwe,
When ech of hem had leyd his feith to borwe.
O Cupide, out of alle charitee!
O regne, that wolt no felawe have with thee!
Ful sooth is seyde, that love ne lordshipe
Wol noght, his thankes, have no felaweshipe;
Wel finden that Arcite and Palamoun.
Arcite is riden anon un-to the toun,
And on the morwe, er it were dayes light,
Ful prively two harneys hath he dight,
Bothe suffisaunt and mete to darreyne
The bataille in the feeld bitwix hem tweyne.
And on his hors, allone as he was born,
He carieth al this harneys him biforn;
And in the grove, at tyme and place y-set,
This Arcite and this Palamon ben met.
Tho chaungen gan the colour in hir face;
Right as the hunter in the regne of Trace,
That stondeth at the gappe with a spere,
Whan hunted is the leoun or the bere,
And hereth him come russhing in the greves,
And breketh bothe bowes and the leves,
And thinketh, 'heer cometh my mortel enemy,
With-oute faile, he moot be deed, or I;
For outhur I mot sleen him at the gappe,
Or he mot sleen me, if that me mishappe:'
So ferden they, in chaunging of hir hewe,
As fer as everich of hem other knewe.
Ther nas no good day, ne no saluing;
But streight, with-outen word or rehersing,
Everich of hem halp for to armen other,
As freendly as he were his owne brother;
And after that, with sharpe speres stronge
They foynen ech at other wonder longe.

Thou mightest wene that this Palamoun
 In his fighting were a wood leoun,
 And as a cruel tygre was Arcite:
 As wilde bores gonne they to smyte,
 That frothen whyte as foom for ire wood.
 Up to the ancle foghte they in hir blood.
 And in this wyse I lete hem fighting dwelle;
 And forth I wol of Theseus yow telle.
 The destinee, ministre general,
 That executeth in the world over-al
 The purveyaunce, that God hath seyn biforn,
 So strong it is, that, though the world had sworn
 The contrarie of a thing, by ye or nay,
 Yet somtyme it shal fallen on a day
 That falleth nat eft with-inne a thousand yere.
 For certainly, our appetytes here,
 Be it of werre, or pees, or hate, or love,
 Al is this reuled by the sighte above.
 This mene I now by mighty Theseus,
 That for to honten is so desirous,
 And namely at the grete hert in May,
 That in his bed ther daweth him no day,
 That he nis clad, and redy for to ryde
 With hunte and horn, and houndes him bisyde.
 For in his hunting hath he swich delyt,
 That it is al his Ioye and appetyt
 To been him-self the grete hertes bane;
 For after Mars he serveth now Diane.
 Cleer was the day, as I have told er this,
 And Theseus, with alle Ioye and blis,
 With his Ipolita, the fayre quene,
 And Emelye, clothed al in grene,
 On hunting be they riden royally.
 And to the grove, that stood ful faste by,
 In which ther was an hert, as men him tolde,
 Duk Theseus the streighte wey hath holde.
 And to the launde he rydeth him ful right,
 For thider was the hert wont have his flight,
 And over a brook, and so forth on his weye.
 This duk wol han a cours at him, or tweye,
 With houndes, swiche as that him list comaunde.
 And whan this duk was come un-to the launde,
 Under the sonne he loketh, and anon
 He was war of Arcite and Palamon,
 That foughten breme, as it were bores two;
 The brighte swerdes wenten to and fro
 So hidously, that with the leeste strook
 It seemed as it wolde felle an ook;
 But what they were, no-thing he ne woot.
 This duk his courser with his spores smoot,
 And at a stert he was bitwix hem two,
 And pulled out a swerd and cryed, 'ho!
 Namore, up peyne of lesing of your heed.
 By mighty Mars, he shal anon be deed,
 That smyteth any strook, that I may seen!

But telleth me what mister men ye been,
That been so hardy for to fighten here
With-outen Iuge or other officere,
As it were in a listes royally?’
This Palamon answerde hastily,
And seyde: ’sire, what nedeth wordes mo?
We have the deeth deserved bothe two.
Two woful wrecches been we, two caytyves,
That been encombred of our owne lyves;
And as thou art a rightful lord and Iuge,
Ne yeve us neither mercy ne refuge,
But slee me first, for seynte charitee;
But slee my felawe eek as wel as me.
Or slee him first; for, though thou knowe it lyte,
This is thy mortal fo, this is Arcite,
That fro thy lond is banished on his heed,
For which he hath deserved to be deed.
For this is he that cam un-to thy gate,
And seyde, that he highte Philostrate.
Thus hath he Iaped thee ful many a yeer,
And thou has maked him thy chief squyer;
And this is he that loveth Emelye.
For sith the day is come that I shal dye,
I make pleyedly my confessioun,
That I am thilke woful Palamoun,
That hath thy prison broken wikkedly.
I am thy mortal fo, and it am I
That loveth so hote Emelye the brighte,
That I wol dye present in hir sighte.
Therefore I axe deeth and my Iuwyse;
But slee my felawe in the same wyse,
For bothe han we deserved to be slayn.’
This worthy duk answerde anon agayn,
And seyde, ’This is a short conclusioun:
Youre owne mouth, by your confessioun,
Hath dampned you, and I wol it recorde,
It nedeth noght to pyne yow with the corde.
Ye shul be deed, by mighty Mars the rede!’
The quene anon, for verray wommanhede,
Gan for to wepe, and so dide Emelye,
And alle the ladies in the companye.
Gret pitee was it, as it thoughte hem alle,
That ever swich a chaunce sholde falle;
For gentil men they were, of greet estat,
And no-thing but for love was this debat;
And sawe hir bloody woundes wyde and sore;
And alle cryden, bothe lasse and more,
’Have mercy, lord, up-on us wommen alle!’
And on hir bare knees adoun they falle,
And wolde have kist his feet ther-as he stood,
Til at the laste aslaked was his mood;
For pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
And though he first for ire quook and sterte,
He hath considered shortly, in a clause,
The trespass of hem bothe, and eek the cause:

And al-though that his ire hir gilt accused,
 Yet in his reson he hem bothe excused;
 As thus: he thoghte wel, that every man
 Wol helpe him-self in love, if that he can,
 And eek deliver him-self out of prisoun;
 And eek his herte had compassioun
 Of wommen, for they wepen ever in oon;
 And in his gentil herte he thoghte anoon,
 And softe un-to himself he seyde: 'fy
 Up-on a lord that wol have no mercy,
 But been a leoun, bothe in word and dede,
 To hem that been in repentaunce and drede
 As wel as to a proud despitous man
 That wol maynteyne that he first bigan!
 That lord hath litel of discrecioun,
 That in swich cas can no divisioun,
 But weyeth pryde and humblesse after oon.'
 And shortly, whan his ire is thus agoon,
 He gan to loken up with eyen lighte,
 And spak thise same wordes al on highte:—
 The god of love, a! *benedicite*,
 How mighty and how greet a lord is he!
 Ayeins his might ther gayneth none obstacles,
 He may be cleped a god for his miracles;
 For he can maken at his owne gyse
 Of everich herte, as that him list devyse.
 Lo heer, this Arcite and this Palamoun,
 That quitly weren out of my prisoun,
 And mighte han lived in Thebes royally,
 And witen I am hir mortal enemy,
 And that hir deeth lyth in my might also,
 And yet hath love, maugree hir eyen two,
 Y-brought hem hider bothe for to dye!
 Now loketh, is nat that an heigh folye?
 Who may been a fool, but-if he love?
 Bihold, for Goddes sake that sit above,
 Se how they blede! be they noght wel arrayed?
 Thus hath hir lord, the god of love, y-payed
 Hir wages and hir fees for hir servyse!
 And yet they wenen for to been ful wyse
 That serven love, for aught that may bifalle!
 But this is yet the beste game of alle,
 That she, for whom they han this Iolitee,
 Can hem ther-for as muche thank as me;
 She woot namore of al this hote fare,
 By God, than woot a cokkow or an hare!
 But al mot been assayed, hoot and cold;
 A man mot been a fool, or yong or old;
 I woot it by my-self ful yore agoon:
 For in my tyme a servant was I oon.
 And therfore, sin I knowe of loves peyne,
 And woot how sore it can a man distreyne,
 As he that hath ben caught ofte in his las,
 I yow foryeve al hoolly this trespass,
 At requeste of the quene that kneleth here,

And eek of Emelye, my suster dere.
And ye shul bothe anon un-to me swere,
That never-mo ye shul my contree dere,
Ne make werre up-on me night ne day,
But been my freendes in al that ye may;
I yow foryeve this trespass every del.
And they him swore his axing fayre and wel,
And him of lordshipe and of mercy preyde,
And he hem graunteth grace, and thus he seyde:
'To speke of royal linage and richesse,
Though that she were a quene or a princesse,
Ech of yow bothe is worthy, doutelees,
To wedden whan tyme is, but nathelees
I speke as for my suster Emelye,
For whom ye have this stryf and Ielousye;
Ye woot your-self, she may not wedden two
At ones, though ye fighten ever-mo:
That oon of yow, al be him looth or leef,
He moot go pypen in an ivy-leef;
This is to seyn, she may nat now han bothe,
Al be ye never so Ielous, ne so wrothe.
And for-thy I yow putte in this degree,
That ech of yow shal have his destinee
As him is shape; and herkneth in what wyse;
Lo, heer your ende of that I shal devyse.
My wil is this, for plat conclusioun,
With-uten any replicacioun,
If that yow lyketh, tak it for the beste,
That everich of yow shal gon wher him leste
Frely, with-uten raunson or daunger;
And this day fifty wykes, fer ne ner,
Everich of yow shal bringe an hundred knightes,
Armed for listes up at alle rightes,
Al redy to darreyne hir by bataille.
And this bihote I yow, with-uten faille,
Up-on my trouthe, and as I am a knight,
That whether of yow bothe that hath might,
This is to seyn, that whether he or thou
May with his hundred, as I spak of now,
Sleen his contrarie, or out of listes dryve,
Him shal I yeve Emelya to wyve,
To whom that fortune yeveth so fair a grace.
The listes shal I maken in this place,
And God so wisly on my soule rewe,
As I shal even Iuge been and trewe.
Ye shul non other ende with me maken,
That oon of yow ne shal be deed or taken.
And if yow thinketh this is wel y-sayd,
Seyeth your avys, and holdeth yow apayd.
This is your ende and your conclusioun.'
Who loketh lightly now but Palamoun?
Who springeth up for Ioye but Arcite?
Who couthe telle, or who couthe it endyte,
The Ioye that is maked in the place
Whan Theseus hath doon so fair a grace?

But doun on knees wente every maner wight,
 And thanked him with al her herte and might,
 And namely the Thebans ofte sythe.
 And thus with good hope and with herte blythe
 They take hir leve, and hom-ward gonne they ryde
 To Thebes, with his olde walles wyde.

Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.

I trowe men wolde deme it necligence,
 If I foryete to tellen the dispence
 Of Theseus, that goth so bisily
 To maken up the listes royally;
 That swich a noble theatre as it was,
 I dar wel seyn that in this world ther nas.
 The circuit a myle was aboute,
 Walled of stoon, and diked al with-out.
 Round was the shap, in maner of compas,
 Ful of degrees, the heighte of sixty pas,
 That, whan a man was set on o degree,
 He letted nat his felawe for to see.
 Est-ward ther stood a gate of marbel whyt,
 West-ward, right swich another in the opposit.
 And shortly to concluden, swich a place
 Was noon in erthe, as in so litel space;
 For in the lond ther nas no crafty man,
 That geometrie or ars-metrik can,
 Ne purtreyour, ne kerver of images,
 That Theseus ne yaf him mete and wages
 The theatre for to maken and devyse.
 And for to doon his ryte and sacrifyse,
 He est-ward hath, up-on the gate above,
 In worship of Venus, goddessse of love,
 Don make an auter and an oratorie;
 And west-ward, in the minde and in memorie
 Of Mars, he maketh hath right swich another,
 That coste largely of gold a fother.
 And north-ward, in a touret on the wal,
 Of alabastre whyt and reed coral
 An oratorie riche for to see,
 In worship of Dyane of chastitee,
 Hath Theseus don wrought in noble wyse.
 But yet hadde I foryeten to devyse
 The noble kerving, and the portreitures,
 The shap, the countenaunce, and the figures,
 That weren in thise oratories three.
 First in the temple of Venus maystow see
 Wrought on the wal, ful pitous to biholde,
 The broken slepes, and the sykes colde;
 The sacred teres, and the waymenting;
 The fyry strokes of the desiring,
 That loves servaunts in this lyf endure;
 The othes, that hir covenants assuren;
 Plesaunce and hope, desyr, fool-hardinesse,
 Beautee and youthe, bauderie, richesse,
 Charmes and force, lesinges, flaterye,
 Dispense, bisynesse, and Ielousy,

That wered of yelwe goldes a gerland,
And a cokkow sitting on hir hand;
Festes, instruments, caroles, daunces,
Lust and array, and alle the circumstaunces
Of love, whiche that I rekne and rekne shal,
By ordre weren peynted on the wal,
And mo than I can make of menciouun.
For soothly, al the mount of Citheroun,
Ther Venus hath hir principal dwelling,
Was shewed on the wal in portreying,
With al the gardin, and the lustinesse.
Nat was foryeten the porter Ydelnesse,
Ne Narcisus the faire of yore agon,
Ne yet the folye of king Salamon,
Ne yet the grete strengthe of Hercules—
Thenchauntements of Medea and Circes—
Ne of Turnus, with the hardy fiers corage,
The riche Cesus, caytif in servage.
Thus may ye seen that wisdom ne richesse,
Beautee ne sleighte, strengthe, ne hardinesse,
Ne may with Venus holde champartye;
For as hir list the world than may she gye.
Lo, alle thise folk so caught were in hir las,
Til they for wo ful ofte seyde 'allas!'
Suffyceth heer ensamples oon or two,
And though I coude rekne a thousand mo.
The statue of Venus, glorious for to see,
Was naked fleting in the large see,
And fro the navel down all covered was
With waves grene, and brighte as any glas.
A citole in hir right hand hadde she,
And on hir heed, ful semely for to see,
A rose gerland, fresh and wel smelling;e;
Above hir heed hir dowves flikeringe.
Biforn hir stood hir sone Cupido,
Up-on his shuldres winges hadde he two;
And blind he was, as it is ofte sene;
A bowe he bar and arwes brighte and kene.
Why sholde I noght as wel eek telle yow al
The portreiture, that was up-on the wal
With-inne the temple of mighty Mars the rede?
Al peynted was the wal, in lengthe and brede,
Lyk to the estres of the grisly place,
That highte the grete temple of Mars in Trace,
In thilke colde frosty regioun,
Ther-as Mars hath his sovereyn mansioun.
First on the wal was peynted a foreste,
In which ther dwelleth neither man ne beste,
With knotty knarry bareyn treës olde
Of stubbes sharpe and hidous to biholde;
In which ther ran a rumbel and a swough,
As though a storm sholde bresten every bough:
And downward from an hille, under a bente,
Ther stood the temple of Mars armipotente,
Wroght al of burned steel, of which thentree

Was long and streit, and gastly for to see.
 And ther-out cam a rage and such a vese,
 That it made al the gates for to rese.
 The northren light in at the dores shoon,
 For windowe on the wal ne was ther noon,
 Thurgh which men mighten any light discerne.
 The dores were alle of adamant eterne,
 Y-clenched overthwart and endelong
 With iren tough; and, for to make it strong,
 Every piler, the temple to sustene,
 Was tonne-greet, of iren bright and shene.
 Ther saugh I first the derke imagining
 Of felonye, and al the compassing;
 The cruel ire, reed as any glede;
 The pykepurs, and eek the pale drede;
 The smyler with the knyf under the cloke;
 The shepne brenning with the blake smoke;
 The treson of the mording in the bedde;
 The open werre, with woundes al bi-bledde;
 Contek, with bloody knyf and sharp manace;
 Al ful of chirking was that sory place.
 The sleere of him-self yet saugh I ther,
 His herte-blood hath bathed al his heer;
 The nayl y-driven in the shode a-night;
 The colde deeth, with mouth gaping up-right.
 Amiddes of the temple sat meschaunce,
 With disconfort and sory contenaunce.
 Yet saugh I woodnesse laughing in his rage;
 Armed compleint, out-hees, and fiers outrage.
 The careyne in the bush, with throte y-corve:
 A thousand slayn, and nat of qualm y-storve;
 The tiraunt, with the prey by force y-raft;
 The toun destroyed, ther was no-thing laft.
 Yet saugh I brent the shippes hoppesteres;
 The hunte strangled with the wilde beres:
 The sowe freten the child right in the cradel;
 The cook y-scalded, for al his longe ladel.
 Noght was foryeten by the infortune of Marte;
 The carter over-riden with his carte,
 Under the wheel ful lowe he lay adoun.
 Ther were also, of Martes divisioun,
 The barbour, and the bocher, and the smith
 That forgeth sharpe swerdes on his stith.
 And al above, depeynted in a tour,
 Saw I conquest sittinge in greet honour,
 With the sharpe swerde over his heed
 Hanginge by a sotil twynes threed.
 Depeynted was the slaughtre of Iulius,
 Of grete Nero, and of Antonius;
 Al be that thilke tyme they were unborn,
 Yet was hir deeth depeynted ther-biforn,
 By manasinge of Mars, right by figure;
 So was it shewed in that portreiture
 As is depeynted in the sterres above,
 Who shal be slayn or elles deed for love.

Suffyceth oon ensample in stories olde,
I may not rekne hem alle, thogh I wolde.
The statue of Mars up-on a carte stood,
Armed, and loked grim as he were wood;
And over his he'ed ther shynen two figures
Of sterres, that been cleped in scriptures,
That oon Puella, that other Rubeus.
This god of armes was arrayed thus:—
A wolf ther stood biforn him at his feet
With eyen rede, and of a man he eet;
With sotil pencil was depeynt this storie,
In redoutinge of Mars and of his glorie.
Now to the temple of Diane the chaste
As shortly as I can I wol me haste,
To telle yow al the descripcioun.
Depeynted been the walles up and doun
Of hunting and of shamfast chastitee.
Ther saugh I how woful Calistopee,
Whan that Diane agreved was with here,
Was turned from a womman til a bere,
And after was she maad the lode-sterre;
Thus was it peynt, I can say yow no ferre;
Hir sone is eek a sterre, as men may see.
Ther saugh I Dane, y-turned til a tree,
I mene nat the goddesse Diane,
But Penneus doughter, which that highte Dane.
Ther saugh I Attheon an hert y-maked,
For vengeaunce that he saugh Diane al naked;
I saugh how that his houndes have him caught,
And freten him, for that they knewe him naught.
Yet peynted was a litel forther-moor,
How Atthalante hunted the wilde boor,
And Meleagre, and many another mo,
For which Diane wroghte him care and wo.
Ther saugh I many another wonder storie,
The whiche me list nat drawn to memorie.
This goddesse on an hert ful hye seet,
With smale houndes al aboute hir feet;
And undernethe hir feet she hadde a mone,
Wexing it was, and sholde wanie sone.
In gaude grene hir statue clothed was,
With bowe in honde, and arwes in a cas.
Hir eyen caste she ful lowe adoun,
Ther Pluto hath his derke regioun.
A womman travailinge was hir biforn,
But, for hir child so longe was unborn,
Ful pitously Lucyna gan she calle,
And seyde, 'help, for thou mayst best of alle.'
Wel couthe he peynten lyfly that it wroghte,
With many a florin he the hewes boghte.
Now been thise listes maad, and Theseus,
That at his grete cost arrayed thus
The temples and the theatre every del,
Whan it was doon, him lyked wonder wel.
But stinte I wol of Theseus a lyte,

And speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
 The day approacheth of hir retourninge,
 That everich sholde an hundred knightes bringe,
 The bataille to darreyne, as I yow tolde;
 And til Athenes, hir covenant for to holde,
 Hath everich of hem broght an hundred knightes
 Wel armed for the werre at alle rightes.
 And sikerly, ther trowed many a man
 That never, sithen that the world bigan,
 As for to speke of knighthod of hir hond,
 As fer as God hath maked see or lond,
 Nas, of so fewe, so noble a companye.
 For every wight that lovede chivalrye,
 And wolde, his thanks, han a passant name,
 Hath preyed that he mighte ben of that game;
 And wel was him, that ther-to chosen was.
 For if ther fille to-morwe swich a cas,
 Ye knowen wel, that every lusty knight,
 That loveth paramours, and hath his might,
 Were it in Engeland, or elles-where,
 They wolde, hir thanks, wilnen to be there.
 To fighte for a lady, *benedicite!*
 It were a lusty sighte for to see.
 And right so ferden they with Palamon.
 With him ther wenten knightes many oon;
 Som wol ben armed in an habergeoun,
 In a brest-plat and in a light gipoun;
 And somme woln have a peyre plates large;
 And somme woln have a Puce sheld, or a targe;
 Somme woln ben armed on hir legges weel,
 And have an ax, and somme a mace of steel.
 Ther nis no newe gyse, that it nas old.
 Armed were they, as I have you told,
 Everich after his opinioun.
 Ther maistow seen coming with Palamoun
 Ligurge him-self, the grete king of Trace;
 Blak was his berd, and manly was his face.
 The cercles of his eyen in his heed,
 They gloweden bitwixe yelow and reed;
 And lyk a griffon loked he aboute,
 With kempe heres on his browes stoute;
 His limes grete, his braunes harde and stronge,
 His shuldres brode, his armes rounde and longe.
 And as the gyse was in his contree,
 Ful hye up-on a char of gold stood he,
 With foure whyte boles in the trays.
 In-stede of cote-armure over his harnays,
 With nayles yelwe and brighte as any gold,
 He hadde a beres skin, col-blak, for-old.
 His longe heer was kembd bihinde his bak,
 As any ravenes fether it shoon for-blak:
 A wrethe of gold arm-greet, of huge wighte,
 Upon his heed, set ful of stones brighte,
 Of fyne rubies and of dyamaunts.
 Aboute his char ther wenten whyte alaunts,

Twenty and mo, as grete as any steer,
To hunten at the leoun or the deer,
And folwed him, with mosel faste y-bounde,
Colers of gold, and torets fyled rounde.
An hundred lordes hadde he in his route
Armed ful wel, with hertes sterne and stoute.
With Arcita, in stories as men finde,
The grete Emetreus, the king of Inde,
Up-on a stede bay, trapped in steel,
Covered in cloth of gold diapred weel,
Cam ryding lyk the god of armes, Mars.
His cote-armure was of cloth of Tars,
Couched with perles whyte and rounde and grete.
His sadel was of brend gold newe y-bete;
A mantelet upon his shuldre hanginge
Bret-ful of rubies rede, as fyr sparklinge.
His criske heer lyk ringes was y-ronne,
And that was yelow, and glitered as the sonne.
His nose was heigh, his eyen bright citryn,
His lippes rounde, his colour was sangwyn,
A fewe fraknes in his face y-spreynd,
Betwixen yelow and somdel blak y-meynd,
And as a leoun he his loking caste.
Of fyve and twenty yeer his age I caste.
His berd was wel bigonne for to springe;
His voys was as a trompe thunderinge.
Up-on his heed he wered of laurer grene
A gerland fresh and lusty for to sene.
Up-on his hand he bar, for his deduyt,
An egle tame, as eny lilie whyt.
An hundred lordes hadde he with him there,
Al armed, sauf hir heddes, in al hir gere,
Ful richely in alle maner thinges.
For trusteth wel, that dukes, erles, kinges,
Were gadered in this noble companye,
For love and for encrees of chivalrye.
Aboute this king ther ran on every part
Ful many a tame leoun and lepart.
And in this wyse thise lordes, alle and some,
Ben on the Sonday to the citee come
Aboute pryme, and in the toun alight.
This Theseus, this duk, this worthy knight,
Whan he had broght hem in-to his citee,
And inned hem, everich in his degree,
He festeth hem, and dooth so greet labour
To esen hem, and doon hem al honour,
That yet men weneth that no mannes wit
Of noon estat ne coude amenden it.
The minstralcy, the service at the feste,
The grete yiftes to the moste and leste,
The riche array of Theseus paleys,
Ne who sat first ne last up-on the deys,
What ladies fairest been or best daunsinge,
Or which of hem can dauncen best and singe,
Ne who most felingly speketh of love:

What haukes sitten on the perche above,
 What houndes ligen on the floor adoun:
 Of al this make I now no mencioun;
 But al theeffect, that thinketh me the beste;
 Now comth the poynt, and herkneth if yow leste.
 The Sonday night, er day bigan to springe,
 When Palamon the larke herde singe,
 Although it nere nat day by houres two,
 Yet song the larke, and Palamon also.
 With holy herte, and with an heigh corage
 He roos, to wenden on his pilgrimage
 Un-to the blisful Citherea benigne,
 I mene Venus, honorable and digne.
 And in hir houre he walketh forth a pas
 Un-to the listes, ther hir temple was,
 And doun he kneleth, and with humble chere
 And herte soor, he seyde as ye shul here.
 'Faireste of faire, o lady myn, Venus,
 Doughter to Iove and spouse of Vulcanus,
 Thou glader of the mount of Citheroun,
 For thilke love thou haddest to Adoun,
 Have pitee of my bittre teres smerte,
 And tak myn humble preyer at thyn herte.
 Allas! I ne have no langage to telle
 Theeffectes ne the torments of myn helle;
 Myn herte may myne harmes nat biwreye;
 I am so confus, that I can noght seye.
 But mercy, lady bright, that knowest weel
 My thought, and seest what harmes that I feel,
 Considere al this, and rewe up-on my sore,
 As wisly as I shal for evermore,
 Emforth my might, thy trewe servant be,
 And holden werre alwey with chastitee;
 That make I myn avow, so ye me helpe.
 I kepe noght of armes for to yelpe,
 Ne I ne axe nat to-morwe to have victorie,
 Ne renoun in this cas, ne veyne glorie
 Of pris of armes blowen up and doun,
 But I wolde have fully possessioun
 Of Emelye, and dye in thy servyse;
 Find thou the maner how, and in what wyse.
 I recche nat, but it may bettre be,
 To have victorie of hem, or they of me,
 So that I have my lady in myne armes.
 For though so be that Mars is god of armes,
 Your vertu is so greet in hevene above,
 That, if yow list, I shal wel have my love,
 Thy temple wol I worshipe evermo,
 And on thyn auter, wher I ryde or go,
 I wol don sacrifice, and fyres bete.
 And if ye wol nat so, my lady swete,
 Than preye I thee, to-morwe with a spere
 That Arcita me thurgh the herte bere.
 Thanne rekke I noght, whan I have lost my lyf,
 Though that Arcita winne hir to his wyf.

This is the effect and ende of my preyere,
Yif me my love, thou blisful lady dere.
Whan thorisoun was doon of Palamon,
His sacrifice he dide, and that anon
Ful pitously, with alle circumstaunces,
Al telle I noght as now his observaunces.
But atte laste the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signe, wher-by that he took
That his preyere accepted was that day.
For thogh the signe shewed a delay,
Yet wiste he wel that graunted was his bone;
And with glad herte he wente him hoom ful sone.
The thridde houre inequal that Palamon
Bigan to Venus temple for to goon,
Up roos the sonne, and up roos Emelye,
And to the temple of Diane gan hye.
Hir maydens, that she thider with hir ladde,
Ful redily with hem the fyr they hadde,
Thencens, the clothes, and the remenant al
That to the sacrifice longen shal;
The hornes fulle of meth, as was the gyse;
Ther lakked noght to doon hir sacrifice.
Smoking the temple, ful of clothes faire,
This Emelye, with herte debonaire,
Hir body wessh with water of a welle;
But how she dide hir ryte I dar nat telle,
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game to heren al;
To him that meneth wel, it were no charge:
But it is good a man ben at his large.
Hir brighte heer was kempt, untressed al;
A coroune of a grene ook cerial
Up-on hir heed was set ful fair and mete.
Two fyres on the auter gan she bete,
And dide hir thinges, as men may biholde
In Stace of Thebes, and thise bokes olde.
Whan kindled was the fyr, with pitous chere
Un-to Diane she spak, as ye may here.
'O chaste goddess of the wodes grene,
To whom bothe hevene and erthe and see is sene,
Quene of the regne of Pluto derk and lowe,
Goddess of maydens, that myn herte hast knowe
Ful many a yeer, and woost what I desire,
As keep me fro thy vengeaunce and thyn ire,
That Attheon aboughte cruelly.
Chaste goddess, wel wostow that I
Desire to been a mayden al my lyf,
Ne never wol I be no love ne wyf.
I am, thou woost, yet of thy companye,
A mayde, and love hunting and venerye,
And for to walken in the wodes wilde,
And noght to been a wyf, and be with childe.
Noght wol I knowe companye of man.
Now help me, lady, sith ye may and can,
For tho thre formes that thou hast in thee.

And Palamon, that hath swich love to me,
 And eek Arcite, that loveth me so sore,
 This grace I preye thee with-oute more,
 As sende love and pees bitwixe hem two;
 And fro me turne away hir hertes so,
 That al hir hote love, and hir desyr,
 And al hir bisy torment, and hir fyr
 Be queynt, or turned in another place;
 And if so be thou wolt not do me grace,
 Or if my destinee be shapen so,
 That I shal nedes have oon of hem two,
 As sende me him that most desireth me.
 Bihold, goddesse of clene chastitee,
 The bittre teres that on my chekes falle.
 Sin thou are mayde, and keper of us alle,
 My maydenhede thou kepe and wel conserve,
 And whyl I live a mayde, I wol thee serve.
 The fyres brenne up-on the auter clere,
 Whyl Emelye was thus in hir preyere;
 But sodeinly she saugh a sighte queynte,
 For right anon oon of the fyres queynte,
 And quiked agayn, and after that anon
 That other fyr was queynt, and al agon;
 And as it queynte, it made a whisteling,
 As doon thise wete brondes in hir brenninge,
 And at the brondes ende out-ran anon
 As it were bloody dropes many oon;
 For which so sore agast was Emelye,
 That she was wel ny mad, and gan to crye,
 For she ne wiste what it signified;
 But only for the fere thus hath she cryed,
 And weep, that it was pitee for to here.
 And ther-with-al Diane gan appere,
 With bowe in hond, right as an hunteresse,
 And seyde: 'Doghter, stint thyn hevinesse.
 Among the goddes hye it is affermed,
 And by eterne word write and confermed,
 Thou shalt ben wedded un-to oon of tho
 That han for thee so muchel care and wo;
 But un-to which of hem I may nat telle.
 Farwel, for I ne may no lenger dwelle.
 The fyres which that on myn auter brenne
 Shul thee declaren, er that thou go henne,
 Thyn aventure of love, as in this cas.'
 And with that word, the arwes in the cas
 Of the goddesse clateren faste and ringe,
 And forth she wente, and made a vanisshinge;
 For which this Emelye astoned was,
 And seyde, 'What amounteth this, allas!
 I putte me in thy proteccioun,
 Diane, and in thy disposicioun.'
 And hoom she gooth anon the nexte weye.
 This is theeffect, ther is namore to seye.
 The nexte houre of Mars folwinge this,
 Arcite un-to the temple walked is

Of fierse Mars, to doon his sacrifice,
With alle the rytes of his payen wyse.
With pitous herte and heigh devocioun,
Right thus to Mars he seyde his orisoun:
'O stronge god, that in the regnes colde
Of Trace honoured art, and lord y-holde,
And hast in every regne and every lond
Of armes al the brydel in thyn hond,
And hem fortunest as thee list devyse,
Accept of me my pitous sacrifice.
If so be that my youthe may deserve,
And that my might be worthy for to serve
Thy godhede, that I may been oon of thyne,
Than preye I thee to rewe up-on my pyne.
For thilke peyne, and thilke hote fyr,
In which thou whylom brendest for desyr,
Whan that thou usedest the grete beautee
Of fayre yonge fresshe Venus free,
And haddest hir in armes at thy wille,
Al-though thee ones on a tyme misfille
Whan Vulcanus had caught thee in his las,
And fond thee ligging by his wyf, allas!
For thilke sorwe that was in thyn herte,
Have routhe as wel up-on my peynes smerte.
I am yong and unkonning, as thou wost,
And, as I trowe, with love offended most,
That ever was any lyves creature;
For she, that dooth me al this wo endure,
Ne reccheth never wher I sinke or flete.
And wel I woot, er she me mercy hete,
I moot with strengthe winne hir in the place;
And wel I woot, withouten help or grace
Of thee, ne may my strengthe noght availle.
Than help me, lord, to-morwe in my bataille,
For thilke fyr that whylom brente thee,
As wel as thilke fyr now brenneth me;
And do that I to-morwe have victorie.
Myn be the travaille, and thyn be the glorie!
Thy sovereign temple wol I most honouren
Of any place, and alwey most labouren
In thy plesaunce and in thy craftes stronge,
And in thy temple I wol my baner honge,
And alle the armes of my companye;
And evere-mo, un-to that day I dye,
Eterne fyr I wol biforn thee finde.
And eek to this avow I wol me binde:
My berd, myn heer that hongeth long adoun,
That never yet ne felte offensioune
Of rasour nor of shere, I wol thee yive,
And ben thy trewe servant whyl I live.
Now lord, have routhe up-on my sorwes sore,
Yif me victorie, I aske thee namore.'
The preyere stinte of Arcita the stronge,
The ringes on the temple-dore that honge,
And eek the dores, clatereden ful faste,

Of which Arcita som-what him agaste.
 The fyres brende up-on the auter brighte,
 That it gan al the temple for to lighte;
 And swete smel the ground anon up-yaf,
 And Arcita anon his hand up-haf,
 And more encens in-to the fyr he caste,
 With othere rytes mo; and atte laste
 The statue of Mars bigan his hauberk ringe.
 And with that soun he herde a murmuringe
 Ful lowe and dim, that sayde thus, 'Victorie.'
 For which he yaf to Mars honour and glorie.
 And thus with Ioye, and hope wel to fare,
 Arcite anon un-to his inne is fare,
 As fayn as fowel is of the brighte sonne.
 And right anon swich stryf ther is bigonne
 For thilke graunting, in the hevene above,
 Bitwixe Venus, the goddesse of love,
 And Mars, the sterne god armipotente,
 That Iupiter was bisy it to stente;
 Til that the pale Saturnus the colde,
 That knew so manye of adventures olde,
 Fond in his olde experience an art,
 That he ful sone hath plesed every part.
 As sooth is sayd, elde hath greet advantage;
 In elde is bothe wisdom and usage;
 Men may the olde at-renne, and noght at-rede.
 Saturne anon, to stinten stryf and drede,
 Al be it that it is agayn his kynde,
 Of al this stryf he gan remedie fynde.
 'My dere doghter Venus,' quod Saturne,
 'My cours, that hath so wyde for to turne,
 Hath more power than wot any man.
 Myn is the drenching in the see so wan;
 Myn is the prison in the derke cote;
 Myn is the strangling and hanging by the throte;
 The murmure, and the cherles rebelling,
 The groyning, and the pryvee empoysoning;
 I do vengeance and pleyn correccioun
 Why I dwelle in the signe of the leoun.
 Myn is the ruine of the hye halles,
 The falling of the toures and of the walles
 Up-on the mynour or the carpenter.
 I slow Sampson in shaking the piler;
 And myne be the maladyes colde,
 The derke tresons, and the castes olde;
 My loking is the fader of pestilence.
 Now weep namore, I shal doon diligence
 That Palamon, that is thyn owne knight,
 Shal have his lady, as thou hast him hight.
 Though Mars shal helpe his knight, yet nathelees
 Bitwixe yow ther moot be som tyme pees,
 Al be ye noght of o complexioun,
 That causeth al day swich divisioun.
 I am thin ayel, redy at thy wille;
 Weep thou namore, I wol thy lust fulfille.'

Now wol I stinten of the goddes above,
 Of Mars, and of Venus, goddesses of love,
 And telle yow, as pleyedly as I can,
 The grete effect, for which that I bigan.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

Greet was the feste in Athenes that day,
 And eek the lusty seson of that May
 Made every wight to been in swich plesaunce,
 That al that Monday lusten they and daunce,
 And spenden it in Venus heigh servyse.
 But by the cause that they sholde ryse
 Erly, for to seen the grete fight,
 Unto hir reste wente they at night.
 And on the morwe, whan that day gan springe,
 Of hors and harneys, noyse and clatering
 Ther was in hostelryes al aboute;
 And to the paleys rood ther many a route
 Of lordes, up-on stedes and palfreys.
 Ther maystow seen devysing of herneys
 So uncouth and so riche, and wroght so weel
 Of goldsmithrie, of browding, and of steel;
 The sheeldes brighte, testers, and trappures;
 Gold-hewen helmes, hauberks, cote-armures;
 Lordes in paraments on hir courseres,
 Knightes of retenue, and eek squyeres
 Nailing the speres, and helmes bokelinge,
 Gigginge of sheeldes, with layneres lacing;
 Ther as need is, they weren no-thing ydel;
 The fomy stedes on the golden brydel
 Gnawinge, and faste the armurers also
 With fyle and hamer prikinge to and fro;
 Yemen on fote, and communes many oon
 With shorte staves, thikke as they may goon;
 Pypes, trompes, nakers, clariounes,
 That in the bataille blowen bloody sounes;
 The paleys ful of peples up and doun,
 Heer three, ther ten, holding hir questioun,
 Divynge of thise Thebane knightes two.
 Somme seyden thus, somme seyde it shal be so;
 Somme helden with him with the blake berd,
 Somme with the balled, somme with the thikke-herd;
 Somme sayde, he loked grim and he wolde fighte;
 He hath a sparth of twenty pound of wighte.
 Thus was the halle ful of divynge,
 Longe after that the sonne gan to springe.
 The grete Theseus, that of his sleep awaked
 With minstralcye and noyse that was maked,
 Held yet the chambre of his paleys riche,
 Til that the Thebane knightes, bothe y-liche
 Honoured, were into the paleys fet.
 Duk Theseus was at a window set,
 Arrayed right as he were a god in trone.
 The peple preesseth thider-ward ful sone
 Him for to seen, and doon heigh reverence,
 And eek to herkne his hest and his sentence.

An heraud on a scaffold made an ho,
 Til al the noyse of the peple was y-do;
 And whan he saugh the peple of noyse al stille,
 Tho showed he the mighty dukes wille.
 'The lord hath of his heigh discrecioun
 Considered, that it were destruccioun
 To gentil blood, to fighten in the gyse
 Of mortal bataille now in this empyrse;
 Wherefore, to shapen that they shul not dye,
 He wol his firste purpos modifye.
 No man therfor, up peyne of los of lyf,
 No maner shot, ne pollax, ne short knyf
 Into the listes sende, or thider bringe;
 Ne short swerd for to stoke, with poynt bytinge,
 No man ne drawe, ne bere it by his syde.
 Ne no man shal un-to his felawe ryde
 But o cours, with a sharp y-grounde spere;
 Foyne, if him list, on fote, him-self to were.
 And he that is at meschief, shal be take,
 And noght slayn, but be broght un-to the stake
 That shal ben ordeyned on either syde;
 But thider he shal by force, and ther abyde.
 And if so falle, the chieftayn be take
 On either syde, or elles slee his make,
 No lenger shal the turneyinge laste.
 God spede yow; goth forth, and ley on faste.
 With long swerd and with maces fight your fille.
 Goth now your wey; this is the lordes wille.'
 The voys of peple touchede the hevene,
 So loude cryden they with mery stevene:
 'God save swich a lord, that is so good,
 He wilneth no destruccioun of blood!'
 Up goon the trompes and the melodye.
 And to the listes rit the companye
 By ordinaunce, thurgh-out the citee large,
 Hanged with cloth of gold, and nat with sarge.
 Ful lyk a lord this noble duk gan ryde,
 Thise two Thebanes up-on either syde;
 And after rood the quene, and Emelye,
 And after that another companye
 Of oon and other, after hir degree.
 And thus they passen thurgh-out the citee,
 And to the listes come they by tyme.
 It nas not of the day yet fully pryme,
 Whan set was Theseus ful riche and hye,
 Ipolita the quene and Emelye,
 And other ladies in degrees aboute.
 Un-to the seetes preesseth al the route.
 And west-ward, thurgh the gates under Marte,
 Arcite, and eek the hundred of his parte,
 With baner reed is entred right anon;
 And in that selve moment Palamon
 Is under Venus, est-ward in the place,
 With baner whyt, and hardy chere and face.
 In al the world, to seken up and down,

So even with-outen variacioun,
Ther nere swiche companyes tweye.
For ther nas noon so wys that coude seye,
That any hadde of other avauntage
Of worthinesse, ne of estaat, ne age,
So even were they chosen, for to gesse.
And in two renges faire they hem dresse.
Whan that hir names rad were everichoon,
That in hir nombre gyle were ther noon,
Tho were the gates shet, and cryed was loude:
'Do now your devoir, yonge knightes proude!'
The heraudes lefte hir priking up and doun;
Now ringen trompes loude and clarioun;
Ther is namore to seyn, but west and est
In goon the speres ful sadly in arest;
In goth the sharpe spore in-to the syde.
Ther seen men who can Iuste, and who can ryde;
Ther shiveren shaftes up-on sheeldes thikke;
He feleth thurgh the herte-spoon the prikke.
Up springen speres twenty foot on highte;
Out goon the swerdes as the silver brighte.
The helmes they to-hewen and to-shrede;
Out brest the blood, with sterne stremes rede.
With mighty maces the bones they to-breste.
He thurgh the thikkeste of the throng gan threste.
Ther stomblen stedes stronge, and doun goth al.
He rolleth under foot as dooth a bal.
He foyneth on his feet with his tronchoun,
And he him hurtleth with his hors adoun.
He thurgh the body is hurt, and sithen y-take,
Maugree his heed, and broght un-to the stake,
As forward was, right ther he moste abyde;
Another lad is on that other syde.
And som tyme dooth hem Theseus to reste,
Hem to refresshe, and drinken if hem leste.
Ful ofte a-day han thise Thebanes two
Togidre y-met, and wroght his felawe wo;
Unhorsed hath ech other of hem tweye.
Ther nas no tygre in the vale of Galgopheye,
Whan that hir whelp is stole, whan it is lyte,
So cruel on the hunte, as is Arcite
For Ielous herte upon this Palamoun:
Ne in Belmarye ther nis so fel leoun,
That hunted is, or for his hunger wood,
Ne of his praye desireth so the blood,
As Palamon to sleen his fo Arcite.
The Ielous strokes on hir helmes byte;
Out renneth blood on bothe hir sydes rede.
Som tyme an ende ther is of every dede;
For er the sonne un-to the reste wente,
The stronge king Emetreus gan hente
This Palamon, as he faught with Arcite,
And made his swerd depe in his flesh to byte;
And by the force of twenty is he take
Unyolden, and y-drawe unto the stake.

And in the rescous of this Palamoun
 The stronge king Ligurge is born adoun;
 And king Emetreus, for al his strengthe,
 Is born out of his sadel a swerdes lengthe,
 So hitte him Palamon er he were take;
 But al for noght, he was broght to the stake.
 His hardy herte mighte him helpe naught;
 He moste abyde, whan that he was caught
 By force, and eek by composicioun.
 Who sorweth now but woful Palamoun,
 That moot namore goon agayn to fighte?
 And whan that Theseus had seyn this sighte,
 Un-to the folk that foghten thus echoon
 He cryde, 'Ho! namore, for it is doon!
 I wol be trewe Iuge, and no partye.
 Arcite of Thebes shal have Emelye,
 That by his fortune hath hir faire y-wonne.'
 Anon ther is a noyse of peple bigonne
 For Ioye of this, so loude and heigh with-alles,
 It semed that the listes sholde falle.
 What can now faire Venus doon above?
 What seith she now? what dooth this quene of love?
 But wepeth so, for wanting of hir wille,
 Til that hir teres in the listes fille;
 She seyde: 'I am ashamed, doutelees.'
 Saturnus seyde: 'Doghter, hold thy pees.
 Mars hath his wille, his knight hath al his bone,
 And, by myn heed, thou shalt ben esed sone.'
 The trompes, with the loude minstralcy, e,
 The heraudes, that ful loude yolle and crye,
 Been in hir wele for Ioye of daun Arcite.
 But herkneth me, and stinteth now a lyte,
 Which a miracle ther bifel anon.
 This fierse Arcite hath of his helm y-don,
 And on a courser, for to shewe his face,
 He priketh endelong the large place,
 Loking upward up-on this Emelye;
 And she agayn him caste a freendlich yë,
 (For wommen, as to speken in comune,
 They folwen al the favour of fortune),
 And she was al his chere, as in his herte.
 Out of the ground a furie infernal sterte,
 From Pluto sent, at requeste of Saturne,
 For which his hors for fere gan to turne,
 And leep asyde, and foundred as he leep;
 And, er that Arcite may taken keep,
 He pighte him on the pomel of his heed,
 That in the place he lay as he were deed,
 His brest to-brosten with his sadel-bowe.
 As blak he lay as any cole or crowe,
 So was the blood y-ronnen in his face.
 Anon he was y-born out of the place
 With herte soor, to Theseus paleys.
 Tho was he corven out of his harneys,
 And in a bed y-brought ful faire and blyve,

For he was yet in memorie and alyve,
And alway crying after Emelye.
Duk Theseus, with al his companye,
Is comen hoom to Athenes his citee,
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee.
Al be it that this aventure was falle,
He nolde noght disconforten hem alle.
Men seyde eek, that Arcite shal nat dye;
He shal ben heled of his maladye.
And of another thing they were as fayn,
That of hem alle was ther noon y-slayn,
Al were they sore y-hurt, and namely oon,
That with a spere was thirled his brest-boon.
To othere woundes, and to broken armes,
Some hadden salves, and some hadden charmes;
Fermacies of herbes, and eek save
They dronken, for they wolde hir limes have.
For which this noble duk, as he wel can,
Conforteth and honoureth every man,
And made revel al the longe night,
Un-to the straunge lordes, as was right.
Ne ther was holden no disconfitinge,
But as a Iustes or a tourneyinge;
For soothly ther was no disconfiture,
For falling nis nat but an aventure;
Ne to be lad with fors un-to the stake
Unyolden, and with twenty knightes take,
O persone allone, with-outen mo,
And haried forth by arme, foot, and to,
And eek his stede driven forth with staves,
With footmen, bothe yemen and eek knaves,
It nas aretted him no vileinye,
Ther may no man clepen it cowardye.
For which anon duk Theseus leet crye,
To stinten alle rancour and envye,
The gree as wel of o syde as of other,
And either syde y-lyk, as otheres brother;
And yaf hem yiftes after hir degree,
And fully heeld a feste dayes three;
And conveyed the kinges worthily
Out of his toun a Iournee largely.
And hoom wente every man the righte way.
Ther was namore, but 'far wel, have good day!'
Of this bataille I wol namore endyte,
But speke of Palamon and of Arcite.
Swelleth the brest of Arcite, and the sore
Encreesseth at his herte more and more.
The clothered blood, for any lechecraft,
Corrupteth, and is in his bouk y-laft,
That neither veyne-blood, ne ventusinge,
Ne drinke of herbes may ben his helpinge.
The vertu expulsif, or animal,
Fro thilke vertu cleped natural
Ne may the venim voyden, ne expelle.
The pypes of his longes gonne to swelle,

And every lacerte in his brest adoun
 Is shent with venim and corrupcioun.
 Him gayneth neither, for to gete his lyf,
 Vomyt upward, ne downward laxatif;
 Al is to-brosten thilke regioun,
 Nature hath now no dominacioun.
 And certainly, ther nature wol nat wirche,
 Far-wel, phisyk! go ber the man to chirche!
 This al and som, that Arcita mot dye,
 For which he sendeth after Emelye,
 And Palamon, that was his cosin dere;
 Than seyde he thus, as ye shul after here.
 'Naught may the woful spirit in myn herte
 Declare o poynt of alle my sorwes smerte
 To yow, my lady, that I love most;
 But I biquethe the service of my gost
 To yow aboven every creature,
 Sin that my lyf may no lenger dure.
 Allas, the wo! allas, the peynes stronge,
 That I for yow have suffred, and so longe!
 Allas, the deeth! allas, myn Emelye!
 Allas, departing of our companye!
 Allas, myn hertes quene! allas, my wyf!
 Myn hertes lady, endere of my lyf!
 What is this world? what asketh men to have?
 Now with his love, now in his colde grave
 Allone, with-uten any companye.
 Far-wel, my swete fo! myn Emelye!
 And softe tak me in your armes tweye,
 For love of God, and herkneth what I seye.
 I have heer with my cosin Palamon
 Had stryf and rancour, many a day a-gon,
 For love of yow, and for my Ielousye.
 And Iupiter so wis my soule gye,
 To speken of a servant proprely,
 With alle circumstaunces trewely,
 That is to seyn, trouthe, honour, and knighthede,
 Wisdom, humblesse, estaat, and heigh kinrede,
 Freedom, and al that longeth to that art,
 So Iupiter have of my soule part,
 As in this world right now ne knowe I non
 So worthy to ben loved as Palamon,
 That serveth yow, and wol don al his lyf.
 And if that ever ye shul been a wyf,
 Foryet nat Palamon, the gentil man.'
 And with that word his speche faille gan,
 For from his feet up to his brest was come
 The cold of deeth, that hadde him overcome.
 And yet more-over, in his armes two
 The vital strengthe is lost, and al ago.
 Only the intellect, with-uten more,
 That dwelled in his herte syk and sore,
 Gan faillen, when the herte felte deeth,
 Dusked his eyen two, and failed breeth.
 But on his lady yet caste he his yë;

His laste word was, 'mercy, Emelye!'
His spirit chaunged hous, and wente ther,
As I cam never, I can nat tellen wher.
Therfor I stinte, I nam no divinistre;
Of soules finde I nat in this registre,
Ne me ne list thilke opiniouns to telle
Of hem, though that they wryten wher they dwelle.
Arcite is cold, ther Mars his soule gye;
Now wol I speken forth of Emelye.
Shrighte Emelye, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his suster took anon
Swowninge, and bar hir fro the corps away.
What helpeth it to tarien forth the day,
To tellen how she weep, bothe eve and morwe?
For in swich cas wommen have swich sorwe,
Whan that hir housbonds been from hem ago,
That for the more part they sorwen so,
Or elles fallen in swich maladye,
That at the laste certainly they dye.
Infinite been the sorwes and the teres
Of olde folk, and folk of tendre yeres,
In al the toun, for deeth of this Theban;
For him ther wepeth bothe child and man;
So greet a weping was ther noon, certayn,
Whan Ector was y-brought, al fresh y-slayn,
To Troye; allas! the pitee that was ther,
Cracching of chekes, rending eek of heer.
'Why woldestow be deed,' thise wommen crye,
'And haddest gold y-nough, and Emelye?'
No man mighte gladen Theseus,
Savage his olde fader Egeus,
That knew this worldes transmutacioun,
As he had seyn it chaungen up and down,
Ioye after wo, and wo after gladnesse:
And shewed hem ensamples and lyknesse.
'Right as ther deyed never man,' quod he,
'That he ne livede in erthe in som degree,
Right so ther livede never man,' he seyde,
'In al this world, that som tyme he ne deyde.
This world nis but a thurghfare ful of wo,
And we ben pilgrimes, passinge to and fro;
Deeth is an ende of every worldly sore.'
And over al this yet seyde he muchel more
To this effect, ful wysly to enhorten
The peple, that they sholde hem reconforte.
Duk Theseus, with al his bisy cure,
Caste now wher that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best y-maked be,
And eek most honorable in his degree.
And at the laste he took conclusioun,
That ther as first Arcite and Palamoun
Hadden for love the bataille hem bitwene,
That in that selve grove, swote and grene,
Ther as he hadde his amorous desires,
His compleynt, and for love his hote fires,

He wolde make a fyr, in which thoffice
 Funeral he mighte al accomplice;
 And leet comaunde anon to hakke and hewe
 The okes olde, and leye hem on a rewe
 In colpons wel arrayed for to brenne;
 His officers with swifte feet they renne
 And ryde anon at his comaundement.
 And after this, Theseus hath y-sent
 After a bere, and it al over-spradde
 With cloth of gold, the richest that he hadde.
 And of the same suyte he cladde Arcite;
 Upon his hondes hadde he gloves whyte;
 Eek on his heed a croune of laurer grene,
 And in his hond a swerd ful bright and kene.
 He leyde him bare the visage on the bere,
 Therwith he weep that pitee was to here.
 And for the peple sholde seen him alle,
 Whan it was day, he broghte him to the halle,
 That roreth of the crying and the soun.
 Tho cam this woful Theban Palamoun,
 With flotery berd, and ruggy asschy heres,
 In clothes blake, y-dropped al with teres;
 And, passing othere of weping, Emelye,
 The rewfulleste of al the companye.
 In as muche as the service sholde be
 The more noble and riche in his degree,
 Duk Theseus leet forth three stedes bringe,
 That trapped were in steel al gliteringe,
 And covered with the armes of daun Arcite.
 Up-on thise stedes, that weren grete and whyte,
 Ther seten folk, of which oon bar his sheeld,
 Another his spere up in his hondes heeld;
 The thridde bar with him his bowe Turkeys,
 Of brend gold was the cas, and eek the harneys;
 And riden forth a pas with sorweful chere
 Toward the grove, as ye shul after here.
 The nobleste of the Grekes that ther were
 Upon hir shuldres carieden the bere,
 With slakke pas, and eyen rede and wete,
 Thurgh-out the citee, by the maister-strete,
 That sprad was al with blak, and wonder hye
 Right of the same is al the strete y-wrye.
 Up-on the right hond wente old Egeus,
 And on that other syde duk Theseus,
 With vessels in hir hand of gold ful fyn,
 Al ful of hony, milk, and blood, and wyn;
 Eek Palamon, with ful greet companye;
 And after that cam woful Emelye,
 With fyr in honde, as was that tyme the gyse,
 To do thoffice of funeral servyse.
 Heigh labour, and ful greet apparailinge
 Was at the service and the fyr-makinge,
 That with his grene top the heven raughte,
 And twenty fadme of brede the armes straughte;
 This is to seyn, the bowes were so brode.

Of stree first ther was leyd ful many a lode.
But how the fyr was maked up on highte,
And eek the names how the treës highte,
As ook, firre, birch, asp, alder, holm, popler,
Wilow, elm, plane, ash, box, chasteyn, lind, laurer,
Mapul, thorn, beech, hasel, ew, whippeltree,
How they weren feld, shal nat be told for me;
Ne how the goddes ronnen up and doun,
Disherited of hir habitacioun,
In which they woneden in reste and pees,
Nymphes, Faunes, and Amadrides;
Ne how the bestes and the briddes alle
Fledden for fere, whan the wode was falle;
Ne how the ground agast was of the light,
That was nat wont to seen the sonne bright;
Ne how the fyr was couched first with stree,
And than with drye stokkes cloven a three,
And than with grene wode and spycerye,
And than with cloth of gold and with perrye,
And gerlandes hanging with ful many a flour,
The mirre, thencens, with al so greet odour;
Ne how Arcite lay among al this,
Ne what richesse aboute his body is;
Ne how that Emelye, as was the gyse,
Putte in the fyr of funeral servyse;
Ne how she swowned whan men made the fyr,
Ne what she spak, ne what was hir desyr;
Ne what Ieweles men in the fyr tho caste,
Whan that the fyr was greet and brente faste;
Ne how som caste hir sheeld, and som hir spere,
And of hir vestiments, whiche that they were,
And cuppes ful of wyn, and milk, and blood,
Into the fyr, that brente as it were wood;
Ne how the Grekes with an huge route
Thryës riden al the fyr aboute
Up-on the left hand, with a loud shoutinge,
And thryës with hir speres clateringe;
And thryës how the ladies gonne crye;
Ne how that lad was hom-ward Emelye;
Ne how Arcite is brent to asshen colde;
Ne how that liche-wake was y-holde
Al thilke night, ne how the Grekes pleye
The wake-pleyes, ne kepe I nat to seye;
Who wrastleth best naked, with oille enoynt,
Ne who that bar him best, in no disioynt.
I wol nat tellen eek how that they goon
Hoom til Athenes, whan the pley is doon;
But shortly to the poynt than wol I wende,
And maken of my longe tale an ende.
By processe and by lengthe of certeyn yeres
Al stinted is the moorning and the teres
Of Grekes, by oon general assent.
Than semed me ther was a parlement
At Athenes, up-on certeyn poynts and cas;
Among the whiche poynts y-spoken was

To have with certeyn contrees alliaunce,
 And have fully of Thebans obeisaunce.
 For which this noble Theseus anon
 Leet senden after gentil Palamon,
 Unwist of him what was the cause and why;
 But in his blake clothes sorwefully
 He cam at his comaundement in hye.
 Tho sente Theseus for Emelye.
 Whan they were set, and hust was al the place,
 And Theseus abiden hadde a space
 Er any word cam from his wyse brest,
 His eyen sette he ther as was his lest,
 And with a sad visage he syked stille,
 And after that right thus he seyde his wille.
 'The firste moevere of the cause above,
 Whan he first made the faire cheyne of love,
 Greet was theeffect, and heigh was his entente;
 Wel wiste he why, and what ther-of he mente;
 For with that faire cheyne of love he bond
 The fyr, the eyr, the water, and the lond
 In certeyn boundes, that they may nat flee;
 That same prince and that moevere,' quod he,
 'Hath stablissed, in this wrecched world adoun,
 Certeyne dayes and duracioun
 To al that is engendred in this place,
 Over the whiche day they may nat pace,
 Al mowe they yet tho dayes wel abregge;
 Ther needeth non auctoritee allegge,
 For it is preved by experience,
 But that me list declaren my sentence.
 Than may men by this ordre wel discerne,
 That thilke moevere stable is and eterne.
 Wel may men knowe, but it be a fool,
 That every part deryveth from his hool.
 For nature hath nat take his beginning
 Of no partye ne cantel of a thing,
 But of a thing that parfit is and stable,
 Descending so, til it be corrumpable.
 And therfore, of his wyse purveyaunce,
 He hath so wel biset his ordinaunce,
 That spesces of thinges and progressiouns
 Shullen enduren by successiouns,
 And nat eterne be, with-oute lye:
 This maistow understonde and seen at eye.
 'Lo the ook, that hath so long a norissinge
 From tyme that it first biginneth springe,
 And hath so long a lyf, as we may see,
 Yet at the laste wasted is the tree.
 'Considereth eek, how that the harde stoon
 Under our feet, on which we trede and goon,
 Yit wasteth it, as it lyth by the weye.
 The brode river somtyme wexeth dreye.
 The grete tounes see we wane and wende.
 Than may ye see that al this thing hath ende.
 'Of man and womman seen we wel also,

That nedeth, in oon of thise termes two,
This is to seyn, in youthe or elles age,
He moot ben deed, the king as shal a page;
Som in his bed, som in the depe see,
Som in the large feeld, as men may se;
Ther helpeth noght, al goth that ilke weye.
Thanne may I seyn that al this thing moot deye.
What maketh this but Iupiter the king?
The which is prince and cause of alle thing,
Converting al un-to his propre welle,
From which it is deryved, sooth to telle.
And here-agayns no creature on lyve
Of no degree availleth for to stryve.
'Thanne is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
To maken vertu of necessitee,
And take it wel, that we may nat eschue,
And namely that to us alle is due.
And who-so gruccheth ought, he dooth folye,
And rebel is to him that al may gye.
And certainly a man hath most honour
To dyen in his excellence and flour,
Whan he is siker of his gode name;
Than hath he doon his freend, ne him, no shame.
And gladder oghte his freend ben of his deeth,
Whan with honour up-yolden is his breeth,
Than whan his name apalled is for age;
For al forgeten is his vasselage.
Than is it best, as for a worthy fame,
To dyen whan that he is best of name.
The contrarie of al this is wilfulnesse.
Why grucchen we? why have we hevinesse,
That good Arcite, of chivalrye flour
Departed is, with duetee and honour,
Out of this foule prison of this lyf?
Why grucchen heer his cosin and his wyf
Of his wel-fare that loved hem so weel?
Can he hem thank? nay, God wot, never a deel,
That bothe his soule and eek hem-self offende,
And yet they mowe hir lustes nat amende.
'What may I conclude of this longe serie,
But, after wo, I rede us to be merie,
And thanken Iupiter of al his grace?
And, er that we departen from this place,
I rede that we make, of sorwes two,
O parfyt Ioye, lasting ever-mo;
And loketh now, wher most sorwe is her-inne,
Ther wol we first amenden and biginne.
'Suster,' quod he, 'this is my fulle assent,
With al thavys heer of my parlement,
That gentil Palamon, your owne knight,
That serveth yow with wille, herte, and might,
And ever hath doon, sin that ye first him knewe,
That ye shul, of your grace, up-on him rewe,
And taken him for housbonde and for lord:
Leen me your hond, for this is our acord.

Lat see now of your wommanly pitee.
 He is a kinges brother sone, pardee;
 And, though he were a povre bachelor,
 Sin he hath served yow so many a yeer,
 And had for yow so greet adversitee,
 It moste been considered, leveth me;
 For gentil mercy oghte to passen right.
 Than seyde he thus to Palamon ful right;
 'I trowe ther nedeth litel sermoning
 To make yow assente to this thing.
 Com neer, and tak your lady by the hond.'
 Bitwixen hem was maad anon the bond,
 That highte matrimoine or mariage,
 By al the counseil and the baronage.
 And thus with alle blisse and melodye
 Hath Palamon y-wedded Emelye.
 And God, that al this wyde world hath wroght,
 Sende him his love, that hath it dere a-boght.
 For now is Palamon in alle wele,
 Living in blisse, in richesse, and in hele;
 And Emelye him loveth so tendrely,
 And he hir serveth al-so gentilly,
 That never was ther no word hem bitwene
 Of Ielousye, or any other tene.
 Thus endeth Palamon and Emelye;
 And God save al this faire companye!—Amen.
Here is ended the Knightes Tale.

THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

Here folwen the wordes bitwene the Host and the Millere.

Whan that the Knight had thus his tale y-told,
 In al the route nas ther yong ne old
 That he ne seyde it was a noble storie,
 And worthy for to drawen to memorie;
 And namely the gentils everichoon.
 Our Hoste lough and swoor, 'so moot I goon,
 This gooth aright; unboked is the male;
 Lat see now who shal telle another tale:
 For trewely, the game is wel bigonne.
 Now telleth ye, sir Monk, if that ye conne,
 Sumwhat, to quyte with the Knightes tale.'
 The Miller, that for-dronken was al pale,
 So that unnethe up-on his hors he sat,
 He nolde avalen neither hood ne hat,
 Ne abyde no man for his curteisye,
 But in Pilates vois he gan to crye,
 And swoor by armes and by blood and bones,
 'I can a noble tale for the nones,
 With which I wol now quyte the Knightes tale.'
 Our Hoste saugh that he was dronke of ale,
 And seyde: 'abyd, Robin, my leve brother,
 Som better man shal telle us first another:
 Abyd, and lat us werken thriftily.'
 'By goddes soul,' quod he, 'that wol nat I;

For I wol speke, or elles go my wey.
Our Hoste answerde: 'tel on, a devel wey!
Thou art a fool, thy wit is overcome.'
'Now herkneth,' quod the Miller, 'alle and some!
But first I make a protestacioun
That I am dronke, I knowe it by my soun;
And therfore, if that I misspeke or seye,
Wyte it the ale of Southwerk, I yow preye;
For I wol telle a legende and a lyf
Bothe of a Carpenter, and of his wyf,
How that a clerk hath set the wrightes cappe.'
The Reve answerde and seyde, 'stint thy clappe,
Lat be thy lewed dronken harlotrye.
It is a sinne and eek a greet folye
To apeiren any man, or him diffame,
And eek to bringen wyves in swich fame.
Thou mayst y-nogh of othere thinges seyn.'
This dronken Miller spak ful sone ageyn,
And seyde, 'leve brother Osewold,
Who hath no wyf, he is no cokewold.
But I sey nat therfore that thou art oon;
Ther been ful gode wyves many oon,
And ever a thousand gode ayeyns oon badde,
That knowestow wel thy-self, but-if thou madde.
Why artow angry with my tale now?
I have a wyf, pardee, as well as thou,
Yet nolde I, for the oxen in my plogh,
Taken up-on me more than y-nogh,
As demen of my-self that I were oon;
I wol beleve wel that I am noon.
An housbond shal nat been inquisitif
Of goddes privetee, nor of his wyf.
So he may finde goddes foyson there,
Of the remenant nedeth nat enquire.'
What sholde I more seyn, but this Millere
He nolde his wordes for no man forbere,
But tolde his cherles tale in his manere;
Me thinketh that I shal reherce it here.
And ther-fore every gentil wight I preye,
For goddes love, demeth nat that I seye
Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce
Hir tales alle, be they bettre or werse,
Or elles falsen som of my matere.
And therfore, who-so list it nat y-here,
Turne over the leef, and chese another tale;
For he shal finde y-nowe, grete and smale,
Of storial thing that toucheth gentillesse,
And eek moralitee and holinesse;
Blameth nat me if that ye chese amis.
The Miller is a cherl, ye knowe wel this;
So was the Reve, and othere many mo,
And harlotrye they tolden bothe two.
Avyseth yow and putte me out of blame;
And eek men shal nat make earnest of game.
Here endeth the prologe.

THE MILLERES TALE.

Here biginneth the Millere his tale.

Whylom ther was dwellinge at Oxenford
 A riche gnof, that gestes heeld to bord,
 And of his craft he was a Carpenter.
 With him ther was dwellinge a povre scoler,
 Had lerned art, but al his fantasye
 Was turned for to lerne astrologye,
 And coude a certeyn of conclusiouns
 To demen by interrogaciouns,
 If that men axed him in certain houres,
 Whan that men sholde have droghte or elles shoures,
 Or if men axed him what sholde bifalle
 Of every thing, I may nat rekene hem alle.
 This clerk was cleped hende Nicholas;
 Of derne love he coude and of solas;
 And ther-to be was sleigh and ful privee,
 And lyk a mayden meke for to see.
 A chambre hadde he in that hostelrye
 Allone, with-outen any companye,
 Ful fetisly y-dight with herbes swote;
 And he him-self as swete as is the rote
 Of licorys, or any cetewale.
 His Almageste and bokes grete and smale,
 His astrelabie, longinge for his art,
 His augrim-stones layen faire a-part
 On shelves couched at his beddes heed:
 His presse y-covered with a falding reed.
 And al above ther lay a gay sautrye,
 On which he made a nightes melodye
 So swetely, that al the chambre rong;
 And *Angelus ad virginem* he song;
 And after that he song the kinges note;
 Ful often blessed was his mery throte.
 And thus this swete clerk his tyme spent
 After his freendes finding and his rente.
 This Carpenter had wedded newe a wyf
 Which that he lovede more than his lyf;
 Of eightetene yeer she was of age.
 Ialous he was, and heeld hir narwe in cage,
 For she was wilde and yong, and he was old
 And demed him-self ben lyk a cokewold.
 He knew nat Catoun, for his wit was rude,
 That bad man sholde wedde his similitude.
 Men sholde wedden after hir estaat,
 For youthe and elde is often at debaat.
 But sith that he was fallen in the snare,
 He moste endure, as other folk, his care.
 Fair was this yonge wyf, and ther-with-al
 As any wesele hir body gent and smal.
 A ceynt she werede barred al of silk,
 A barmclooth eek as whyt as morne milk
 Up-on hir lendes, ful of many a gore.
 Whyt was hir smok, and brouded al bifore

And eek bihinde, on hir coler aboute,
Of col-blak silk, with-inne and eek with-oute.
The tapes of hir whyte voluper
Were of the same suyte of hir coler;
Hir filet brood of silk, and set ful hye:
And sikerly she hadde a likerous yë.
Ful smale y-pulled were hir browes two,
And tho were bent, and blake as any sloo.
She was ful more blisful on to see
Than is the newe pere-ionette tree;
And softer than the wolfe is of a wether.
And by hir girdel heeng a purs of lether
Tasseld with silk, and perled with latoun.
In al this world, to seken up and doun,
There nis no man so wys, that coude thenche
So gay a popelote, or swich a wenche.
Ful brighter was the shyning of hir hewe
Than in the tour the noble y-forged newe.
But of hir song, it was as loude and yerne
As any swalwe sittinge on a berne.
Ther-to she coude skippe and make game,
As any kide or calf folwinge his dame.
Hir mouth was swete as bragot or the meeth,
Or hord of apples leyd in hey or heeth.
Winsinge she was, as is a Ioly colt,
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.
A brooch she baar up-on hir lowe coler,
As brood as is the bos of a bocler.
Hir shoes were laced on hir legges hye;
She was a prymerole, a pigges-nye
For any lord to leggen in his bedde,
Or yet for any good yeman to wedde.
Now sire, and eft sire, so bifel the cas,
That on a day this hende Nicholas
Fil with this yonge wyf to rage and pleye,
Whyl that hir housbond was at Oseneye,
As clerkes ben ful subtile and ful queynte;
And prively he caughte hir by the queynte,
And seyde, 'y-wis, but if ich have my wille,
For derne love of thee, lemman, I spille.'
And heeld hir harde by the haunche-bones,
And seyde, 'lemman, love me al at-ones,
Or I wol dyen, also god me save!'
And she sprong as a colt doth in the trave,
And with hir heed she wryed faste away,
And seyde, 'I wol nat kisse thee, by my fey,
Why, lat be,' quod she, 'lat be, Nicholas,
Or I wol crye out "harrow" and "allas."
Do wey your handes for your curteisye!'
This Nicholas gan mercy for to crye,
And spak so faire, and profred hir so faste,
That she hir love him graunted atte laste,
And swoor hir ooth, by seint Thomas of Kent,
That she wol been at his comandement,
Whan that she may hir leyser wel espye.

'Myn housbond is so ful of Ialousye,
 That but ye wayte wel and been privee,
 I woot right wel I nam but deed,' quod she.
 'Ye moste been ful derne, as in this cas.'
 'Nay ther-of care thee noght,' quod Nicholas,
 'A clerk had litherly biset his whyle,
 But-if he coude a Carpenter bigyle.'
 And thus they been acorded and y-sworn
 To wayte a tyme, as I have told biforn.
 Whan Nicholas had doon thus everydeel,
 And thakked hir aboute the lendes weel,
 He kist hir swete, and taketh his sautrye,
 And pleyeth faste, and maketh melodye.
 Than fil it thus, that to the parish-chirche,
 Cristes owne werkes for to wirche,
 This gode wyf wente on an haliday;
 Hir forheed shoon as bright as any day,
 So was it wasshen whan she leet hir werk.
 Now was ther of that chirche a parish-clerk,
 The which that was y-cleped Absolon.
 Crul was his heer, and as the gold it shoon,
 And strouted as a fanne large and brode;
 Ful streight and even lay his Ioly shode.
 His rode was reed, his eyen greye as goos;
 With Powles window corven on his shoos,
 In hoses rede he wente fetisly.
 Y-clad he was ful smal and proprely,
 Al in a kirtel of a light wachet;
 Ful faire and thikke been the poyntes set.
 And ther-up-on he hadde a gay surplys
 As whyt as is the blosme up-on the rys.
 A mery child he was, so god me save,
 Wel coude he laten blood and clippe and shave,
 And make a chartre of lond or acquitaunce.
 In twenty manere coude he trippe and daunce
 After the scole of Oxenforde tho,
 And with his legges casten to and fro,
 And pleyen songes on a small rubible;
 Ther-to he song som-tyme a loud quynible;
 And as wel coude he pleye on his giterne.
 In al the toun nas brewhous ne taverne
 That he ne visited with his solas,
 Ther any gaylard tappestere was.
 But sooth to seyn, he was somdel squaymous
 Of farting, and of speche dangerous.
 This Absolon, that Iolif was and gay,
 Gooth with a sencer on the haliday,
 Sensinge the wyves of the parish faste;
 And many a lovely look on hem he caste,
 And namely on this carpenteres wyf.
 To loke on hir him thoughte a mery lyf,
 She was so propre and swete and likerous.
 I dar wel seyn, if she had been a mous,
 And he a cat, he wolde hir hente anon.
 This parish-clerk, this Ioly Absolon,

Hath in his herte swich a love-longinge,
That of no wyf ne took he noon offringe;
For curteisye, he seyde, he wolde noon.
The mone, whan it was night, ful brighte shoon,
And Absolon his giterne hath y-take,
For paramours, he thoghte for to wake.
And forth he gooth, Iolif and amorous,
Til he cam to the carpenteres hous
A litel after cokkes hadde y-crowe;
And dressed him up by a shot-windowe
That was up-on the carpenteres wal.
He singeth in his vois gentil and smal,
'Now, dere lady, if thy wille be,
I preye yow that ye wol rewe on me,'
Ful wel acordaunt to his giterninge.
This carpenter awook, and herde him singe,
And spak un-to his wyf, and seyde anon,
'What! Alison! herestow nat Absolon
That chaunteth thus under our boures wal?'
And she answerde hir housbond ther-with-al,
'Yis, god wot, Iohn, I here it every-del.'
This passeth forth; what wol ye bet than wel?
Fro day to day this Ioly Absolon
So woweth hir, that him is wo bigon.
He waketh al the night and al the day;
He kempte hise lokkes brode, and made him gay;
He woweth hir by menes and brocage,
And swoor he wolde been hir owne page;
He singeth, brokkinge as a nightingale;
He sente hir piment, meeth, and spycyd ale,
And wafres, pyping hote out of the glede;
And for she was of toune, he profred mede.
For som folk wol ben wonnen for richesse,
And som for strokes, and som for gentillesse.
Somtyme, to shewe his lightnesse and maistrye,
He pleyeth Herodes on a scaffold hye.
But what availleth him as in this cas?
She loveth so this hende Nicholas,
That Absolon may blowe the bukkes horn;
He ne hadde for his labour but a scorn;
And thus she maketh Absolon hir ape,
And al his earnest turneth til a lape.
Ful sooth is this proverbe, it is no lye,
Men seyn right thus, 'alwey the nye slye
Maketh the ferre leve to be looth.'
For though that Absolon be wood or wrooth,
By-cause that he fer was from hir sighte,
This nye Nicholas stood in his lighte.
Now bere thee wel, thou hende Nicholas!
For Absolon may waille and singe 'allas.'
And so bifel it on a Saterdag,
This carpenter was goon til Osenay;
And hende Nicholas and Alisoun
Acorded been to this conclusioun,
That Nicholas shal shapen him a wyle

This sely Ialous housbond to bigyle;
 And if so be the game wente aright,
 She sholde slepen in his arm al night,
 For this was his desyr and hir also.
 And right anon, with-outen wordes mo,
 This Nicholas no lenger wolde tarie,
 But doth ful softe un-to his chambre carie
 Bothe mete and drinke for a day or tweye,
 And to hir housbonde bad hir for to seye,
 If that he axed after Nicholas,
 She sholde seye she niste where he was,
 Of al that day she saugh him nat with yë;
 She trowed that he was in maladye,
 For, for no cry, hir mayde coude him calle;
 He nolde answer, for no-thing that mighte falle.
 This passeth forth al thilke Saterdag,
 That Nicholas stille in his chambre lay,
 And eet and sleep, or dide what him leste,
 Til Sunday, that the sonne gooth to reste.
 This sely carpenter hath greet merveylye
 Of Nicholas, or what thing mighte him eyle,
 And seyde, 'I am adrad, by seint Thomas,
 It stondeth nat aright with Nicholas.
 God shilde that he deyde sodeynly!
 This world is now ful tikel, sikerly;
 I saugh to-day a cors y-born to chirche
 That now, on Monday last, I saugh him wirche.
 Go up,' quod he un-to his knave anoon,
 'Clepe at his dore, or knocke with a stoon,
 Loke how it is, and tel me boldely.'
 This knave gooth him up ful sturdily,
 And at the chambre-dore, whyl that he stood,
 He cryde and knocked as that he were wood:—
 'What! how! what do ye, maister Nicholay?
 How may ye slepen al the longe day?'
 But al for noght, he herde nat a word;
 An hole he fond, ful lowe up-on a bord,
 Ther as the cat was wont in for to crepe;
 And at that hole he looked in ful depe,
 And at the laste he hadde of him a sighte.
 This Nicholas sat gaping ever up-righte,
 As he had kyked on the newe mone.
 Adoun he gooth, and tolde his maister sone
 In what array he saugh this ilke man.
 This carpenter to blessen him bigan,
 And seyde, 'help us, seinte Frideswyde!
 A man woot litel what him shal bityde.
 This man is falle, with his astromye,
 In som woodnesse or in som agonye;
 I thoghte ay wel how that it sholde be!
 Men sholde nat knowe of goddes privetee.
 Ye, blessed be alwey a lewed man,
 That noght but oonly his bileve can!
 So ferde another clerk with astromye;
 He walked in the feeldes for to pry

Up-on the sterres, what ther sholde bifalle,
Til he was in a marle-pit y-falle;
He saugh nat that. But yet, by seint Thomas,
Me reweth sore of hende Nicholas.
He shal be rated of his studying,
If that I may, by Iesus, hevene king!
Get me a staf, that I may underspore,
Why! that thou, Robin, hevest up the dore.
He shal out of his studying, as I gesse'—
And to the chambre-dore he gan him dresse.
His knave was a strong carl for the nones,
And by the haspe he haf it up atones;
In-to the floor the dore fil anon.
This Nicholas sat ay as stille as stoon,
And ever gaped upward in-to the eir.
This carpenter wende he were in despeir,
And hente him by the sholdres mightily,
And shook him harde, and cryde spitously,
'What! Nicholay! what, how! what! loke adoun!
Awake, and thenk on Cristes passioun;
I crouche thee from elves and fro wightes!'
Ther-with the night-spel seyde he anon-rightes
On foure halves of the hous aboute,
And on the threshfold of the dore with-out:—
'Iesu Crist, and seynt Benedight,
Blesse this hous from every wikked wight,
For nightes verye, the white *pater-noster*!
Where wentestow, seynt Petres soster?'
And atte laste this hende Nicholas
Gan for to syke sore, and seyde, 'allas!
Shal al the world be lost eftsones now?'
This carpenter answerde, 'what seystow?
What! thenk on god, as we don, men that swinke.'
This Nicholas answerde, 'fecche me drinke;
And after wol I speke in privetee
Of certeyn thing that toucheth me and thee;
I wol telle it non other man, certeyn.'
This carpenter goth down, and comth ageyn,
And broghte of mighty ale a large quart;
And whan that ech of hem had dronke his part,
This Nicholas his dore faste shette,
And doun the carpenter by him he sette.
He seyde, 'Iohn, myn hoste lief and dere,
Thou shall up-on thy trouthe swere me here,
That to no wight thou shalt this conseil wreye;
For it is Cristes conseil that I seye,
And if thou telle it man, thou are forlore;
For this vengauce thou shalt han therefore,
That if thou wreye me, thou shalt be wood!'
'Nay, Crist forbede it, for his holy blood!'
Quod tho this sely man, 'I nam no labbe,
Ne, though I seye, I nam nat lief to gabbe.
Sey what thou wolt, I shal it never telle
To child ne wyf, by him that harwed helle!'
'Now John,' quod Nicholas, 'I wol nat lye;

I have y-founde in myn astrologye,
 As I have loked in the mone bright,
 That now, a Monday next, at quarter-night,
 Shal falle a reyn and that so wilde and wood,
 That half so greet was never Noës flood.
 This world,' he seyde, 'in lasse than in an hour
 Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour;
 Thus shal mankynde drenche and lese hir lyf.
 This carpenter answerde, 'allas, my wyf!
 And shal she drenche? alas! myn Alisoun!
 For sorwe of this he fil almost adoun,
 And seyde, 'is ther no remedie in this cas?'
 'Why, yis, for gode,' quod hende Nicholas,
 'If thou wolt werken after lore and reed;
 Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed.
 For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe,
 "Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe."
 And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,
 I undertake, with-uten mast and seyl,
 Yet shal I saven hir and thee and me
 Hastow nat herd how saved was Noë,
 Whan that our lord had warned him biforn
 That al the world with water sholde be lorn?'
 'Yis,' quod this carpenter, 'ful yore ago.'
 'Hastow nat herd,' quod Nicholas, 'also
 The sorwe of Noë with his felawshipe,
 Er that he mighte gete his wyf to shipe?
 Him had be lever, I dar wel undertake,
 At thilke tyme, than alle hise wetheres blake,
 That she hadde had a ship hir-self allone.
 And ther-fore, wostou what is best to done?
 This asketh haste, and of an hastif thing
 Men may nat preche or maken taryng.
 Anon go gete us faste in-to this in
 A kneding-trogh, or elles a kimelin,
 For ech of us, but loke that they be large,
 In whiche we mowe swimme as in a barge,
 And han ther-inne vitaille suffisant
 But for a day; fy on the remenant!
 The water shal aslake and goon away
 Aboute pryme up-on the nexte day.
 But Robin may nat wite of this, thy knave,
 Ne eek thy mayde Gille I may nat save;
 Axe nat why, for though thou aske me,
 I wol nat tellen goddes privetee.
 Suffiseth thee, but if thy wittes madde,
 To han as greet a grace as Noë hadde.
 Thy wyf shal I wel saven, out of doute,
 Go now thy wey, and speed thee heer-about.
 But whan thou hast, for hir and thee and me,
 Y-geten us thise kneding-tubbes three,
 Than shaltow hange hem in the roof ful hye,
 That no man of our purveyaunce spye.
 And whan thou thus hast doon as I have seyde,
 And hast our vitaille faire in hem y-leyde,

And eek an ax, to smyte the corde atwo
When that the water comth, that we may go,
And broke an hole an heigh, up-on the gable,
Unto the gardin-ward, over the stable,
That we may frely passen forth our way
Whan that the grete shour is goon away—
Than shaltow swimme as myrie, I undertake,
As doth the whyte doke after hir drake.
Than wol I clepe, "how! Alison! how! John!
Be myrie, for the flood wol passe anon."
And thou wolt seyn, "hayl, maister Nicholay!
Good morwe, I se thee wel, for it is day."
And than shul we be lordes al our lyf
Of al the world, as Noë and his wyf.
But of o thyng I warne thee ful right,
Be wel avysed, on that ilke night
That we ben entred in-to shippes bord,
That noon of us ne speke nat a word,
Ne clepe, ne crye, but been in his preyere;
For it is goddes owne heste dere.
Thy wyf and thou mote hange fer a-twinne,
For that bitwixe yow shal be no sinne
No more in looking than ther shal in dede;
This ordinance is seyde, go, god thee spede!
Tomorwe at night, whan men ben alle aslepe,
In-to our kneding-tubbes wol we crepe,
And sitten ther, abyding goddes grace.
Go now thy wey, I have no lenger space
To make of this no lenger sermoning.
Men seyn thus, "send the wyse, and sey no-thing;"
Thou art so wys, it nedeth thee nat teche;
Go, save our lyf, and that I thee biseche.'
This sely carpenter goth forth his wey.
Ful ofte he seith 'allas' and 'weylawey,'
And to his wyf he tolde his privetee;
And she was war, and knew it bet than he,
What al this queynte cast was for to seye.
But nathelees she ferde as she wolde deye,
And seyde, 'allas! go forth thy wey anon,
Help us to scape, or we ben lost echon;
I am thy trewe verray wedded wyf;
Go, dere spouse, and help to save our lyf.'
Lo! which a greet thyng is affeccoun!
Men may dye of imaginacioun,
So depe may impressioun be take.
This sely carpenter biginneth quake;
Him thinketh verraily that he may see
Noës flood come walwing as the see
To drenchen Alisoun, his hony dere.
He wepeth, weyleth, maketh sory chere,
He syketh with ful many a sory swogh.
He gooth and geteth him a kneding-trogh,
And after that a tubbe and a kimelin,
And prively he sente hem to his in,
And heng hem in the roof in privetee.

His owne hand he made laddres three,
 To climben by the ronges and the stalkes
 Un-to the tubbes hanginge in the balkes,
 And hem vitailed, bothe trogh and tubbe,
 With breed and chese, and good ale in a Iubbe,
 Suffysinge right y-nogh as for a day.
 But er that he had maad al this array,
 He sente his knave, and eek his wenche also,
 Up-on his nede to London for to go.
 And on the Monday, whan it drow to night,
 He shette his dore with-oute candel-light,
 And dressed al thing as it sholde be.
 And shortly, up they clomben alle three;
 They sitten stille wel a furlong-way.
 'Now, *Pater-noster*, clom!' seyde Nicholay,
 And 'clom,' quod John, and 'clom,' seyde Alisoun.
 This carpenter seyde his devocioun,
 And stille he sit, and biddeth his preyere,
 Awaytinge on the reyn, if he it here.
 The dede sleep, for very bisnesse,
 Fil on this carpenter right, as I gesse,
 Aboute corfew-tyme, or litel more;
 For travail of his goost he groneth sore,
 And eft he routeth, for his heed mislay.
 Doun of the laddre stalketh Nicholay,
 And Alisoun, ful softe adoun she spedde;
 With-outen wordes mo, they goon to bedde
 Ther-as the carpenter is wont to lye.
 Ther was the revel and the melodye;
 And thus lyth Alison and Nicholas,
 In bisnesse of mirthe and of solas,
 Til that the belle of laudes gan to ringe,
 And freres in the chauncel gonne singe.
 This parish-clerk, this amorous Absolon,
 That is for love alwey so wo bigon,
 Up-on the Monday was at Oseneye
 With companye, him to disporte and pleye,
 And axed up-on cas a cloisterer
 Ful prively after Iohn the carpenter;
 And he drough him a-part out of the chirche,
 And seyde, 'I noot, I saugh him here nat wirche
 Sin Saterdag; I trow that he be went
 For timber, ther our abbot hath him sent;
 For he is wont for timber for to go,
 And dwellen at the grange a day or two;
 Or elles he is at his hous, certeyn;
 Wher that he be, I can nat sothly seyn.'
 This Absolon ful Ioly was and light,
 And thoghte, 'now is tyme wake al night;
 For sikirly I saugh him nat stiringe
 Aboute his dore sin day bigan to springe.
 So moot I thryve, I shal, at cokkes crowe,
 Ful prively knokken at his windowe
 That stant ful lowe up-on his boures wal.
 To Alison now wol I tellen al

My love-longing, for yet I shal nat misse
That at the leste wey I shal hir kisse.
Som maner confort shal I have, parfay,
My mouth hath icched al this longe day;
That is a signe of kissing atte leste.
Al night me mette eek, I was at a feste.
Therfor I wol gon slepe an houre or tweye,
And al the night than wol I wake and pleye.
Whan that the firste cok hath crowe, anon
Up rist this Ioly lover Absolon,
And him arrayeth gay, at point-devys.
But first he cheweth greyn and lycorys,
To smellen swete, er he had kembd his heer.
Under his tonge a trewe love he beer,
For ther-by wende he to ben gracious.
He rometh to the carpenteres hous,
And stille he stant under the shot-windowe;
Un-to his brest it raughte, it was so lowe;
And softe he cogheth with a semi-soun—
'What do ye, hony-comb, swete Alisoun?
My faire brid, my swete cinamome,
Awaketh, lemman myn, and speketh to me!
Wel litel thenken ye up-on my wo,
That for your love I swete ther I go.
No wonder is thogh that I swelte and swete;
I moorne as doth a lamb after the tete.
Y-wis, lemman, I have swich love-longinge,
That lyk a turtel trewe is my moorninge;
I may nat ete na more than a mayde.'
'Go fro the window, Iakke fool,' she sayde,
'As help me god, it wol nat be "com ba me,"
I love another, and elles I were to blame,
Wel bet than thee, by Iesu, Absolon!
Go forth thy wey, or I wol caste a ston,
And lat me slepe, a twenty devel wey!'
'Allas,' quod Absolon, 'and weylawey!
That trewe love was ever so yvel biset!
Than kisse me, sin it may be no bet,
For Iesus love and for the love of me.'
'Wiltow than go thy wey ther-with?' quod she.
'Ye, certes, lemman,' quod this Absolon.
'Thanne make thee redy,' quod she, 'I come anon;
And un-to Nicholas she seyde stille,
'Now hust, and thou shall laughen al thy fille.'
This Absolon doun sette him on his knees,
And seyde, 'I am a lord at alle degrees;
For after this I hope ther cometh more!
Lemman, thy grace, and swete brid, thyn ore!
The window she undoth, and that in haste,
'Have do,' quod she, 'com of, and speed thee faste,
Lest that our neighebores thee espye.'
This Absolon gan wpe his mouth ful drye;
Derk was the night as pich, or as the cole,
And at the window out she putte hir hole,
And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers,

But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers
 Ful savourly, er he was war of this.
 Abak he sterte, and thoghte it was amis,
 For wel he wiste a womman hath no berd;
 He felte a thing al rough and long y-herd,
 And seyde, 'fy! allas! what have I do?'
 'Tehee!' quod she, and clapte the window to;
 And Absolon goth forth a sory pas.
 'A berd, a berd!' quod hende Nicholas,
 'By goddes *corpus*, this goth faire and weel!'

This sely Absolon herde every deel,
 And on his lippe he gan for anger byte;
 And to him-self he seyde, 'I shal thee quyte!'

Who rubbeth now, who froteth now his lippes
 With dust, with sond, with straw, with clooth, with chippes,
 But Absolon, that seith ful ofte, 'allas!
 My soule bitake I un-to Sathanas,
 But me wer lever than al this toun,' quod he,
 'Of this despyt awroken for to be!
 Allas!' quod he, 'allas! I ne hadde y-bleynt!'

His hote love was cold and al y-queynt;
 For fro that tyme that he had kiste hir ers,
 Of paramours he sette nat a kers,
 For he was heled of his maladye;
 Ful ofte paramours he gan deffye,
 And weep as dooth a child that is y-bete.
 A softe paas he wente over the strete
 Un-til a smith men cleped daun Gerveys,
 That in his forge smithed plough-harneys;
 He sharpeth shaar and culter bisily.
 This Absolon knokketh al esily,
 And seyde, 'undo, Gerveys, and that anon.'
 'What, who artow?' 'It am I, Absolon.'
 'What, Absolon! for Cristes swete tree,
 Why ryse ye so rathe, ey, *benedicite*!
 What eyleth yow? som gay gerl, god it woot,
 Hath broght yow thus up-on the viritoot;
 By sēynt Note, ye woot wel what I mene.'
 This Absolon ne roghte nat a bene
 Of al his pley, no word agayn he yaf;
 He hadde more tow on his distaf
 Than Gerveys knew, and seyde, 'freend so dere,
 That hote culter in the chimenee here,
 As lene it me, I have ther-with to done,
 And I wol bringe it thee agayn ful sone.'
 Gerveys answerde, 'certes, were it gold,
 Or in a poke nobles alle untold,
 Thou sholdest have, as I am trewe smith;
 Ey, Cristes foo! what wol ye do ther-with?'
 'Ther-of,' quod Absolon, 'be as be may;
 I shal wel telle it thee to-morwe day'—
 And caughte the culter by the colde stele.
 Ful softe out at the dore he gan to stele,
 And wente un-to the carpenteres wal.
 He cogheth first, and knokketh ther-with-al

Upon the windowe, right as he dide er.
 This Alison answerde, 'Who is ther
 That knokketh so? I warante it a theef.'
 'Why, nay,' quod he, 'god woot, my swete leef,
 I am thyn Absolon, my dereling!
 Of gold,' quod he, 'I have thee broght a ring;
 My moder yaf it me, so god me save,
 Ful fyn it is, and ther-to wel y-grave;
 This wol I yeve thee, if thou me kisse!'
 This Nicholas was risen for to pisse,
 And thoghte he wolde amenden al the lape,
 He sholde kisse his ers er that he scape.
 And up the windowe dide he hastily,
 And out his ers he putteth prively
 Over the buttok, to the haunche-bon;
 And ther-with spak this clerk, this Absolon,
 'Spek, swete brid, I noot nat wher thou art.'
 This Nicholas anon leet flee a fart,
 As greet as it had been a thonder-dent,
 That with the strook he was almost y-blent;
 And he was redy with his iren hoot,
 And Nicholas amidde the ers he smoot.
 Of gooth the skin an hande-brede aboute,
 The hole culter brende so his toute,
 And for the smert he wende for to dye.
 As he were wood, for wo he gan to crye—
 Help! water! water! help, for goddes herte!'
 This carpenter out of his slomber sterte,
 And herde oon cryen 'water' as he were wood,
 And thoghte, 'Allas! now comth Nowelis flood!'
 He sit him up with-outen wordes mo,
 And with his ax he smoot the corde a-two,
 And doun goth al; he fond neither to selle,
 Ne breed ne ale, til he cam to the celle
 Up-on the floor; and ther aswowne he lay.
 Up sterte hir Alison, and Nicholay,
 And cryden 'out' and 'harrow' in the strete.
 The neighebores, bothe smale and grete,
 In ronnen, for to gauren on this man,
 That yet aswowne he lay, bothe pale and wan;
 For with the fal he brosten hadde his arm;
 But stonde he moste un-to his owne harm.
 For whan he spak, he was anon bore doun
 With hende Nicholas and Alisoun.
 They tolden every man that he was wood,
 He was agast so of 'Nowelis flood'
 Thurgh fantasye, that of his vanitee
 He hadde y-boght him kneding-tubbes three,
 And hadde hem hanged in the roof above;
 And that he preyed hem, for goddes love,
 To sitten in the roof, *par companye*.
 The folk gan laughen at his fantasye;
 In-to the roof they kyken and they gape,
 And turned al his harm un-to a lape.
 For what so that this carpenter answerde,

It was for noght, no man his reson herde;
 With othes grete he was so sworn adoun,
 That he was holden wood in al the toun;
 For every clerk anon-right heeld with other.
 They seyde, 'the man is wood, my leve brother;'
 And every wight gan laughen of this stryf.
 Thus swyved was the carpenteres wyf,
 For al his keping and his lalousye;
 And Absolon hath kist hir nether yë;
 And Nicholas is scalded in the toute.
 This tale is doon, and god save al the route!
Here endeth the Millere his tale.

THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE

The prologe of the Reves tale.

Whan folk had laughen at this nyce cas
 Of Absolon and hende Nicholas,
 Diverse folk diversely they seyde;
 But, for the more part, they loughe and pleyde,
 Ne at this tale I saugh no man him greve,
 But it were only Osewold the Reve,
 By-cause he was of carpenteres craft.
 A litel ire is in his herte y-laft,
 He gan to grucche and blamed it a lyte.
 'So theek,' quod he, 'ful wel coude I yow quyte
 With blering of a proud milleres yë,
 If that me liste speke of ribaudye.
 But ik am old, me list not pley for age;
 Gras-tyme is doon, my fodder is now forage,
 This whyte top wryteth myne olde yeres,
 Myn herte is al-so mowled as myne heres,
 But-if I fare as dooth an open-ers;
 That ilke fruit is ever leng the wers,
 Til it be roten in mullok or in stree.
 We olde men, I drede, so fare we;
 Til we be roten, can we nat be rype;
 We hoppen ay, whyl that the world wol pype.
 For in oure wil ther stiketh ever a nayl,
 To have an hoor heed and a grene tayl,
 As hath a leek; for thogh our might be goon,
 Our wil desireth folie ever in oon.
 For whan we may nat doon, than wol we speke;
 Yet in our asschen olde is fyr y-reke.
 Foure gledes han we, whiche I shal devyse,
 Avaunting, lying, anger, coveityse;
 Thise foure sparkles longen un-to elde.
 Our olde lemes mowe wel been unwelde,
 But wil ne shal nat faillen, that is sooth.
 And yet ik have alwey a coltes tooth,
 As many a yeer as it is passed henne
 Sin that my tappe of lyf bigan to renne.
 For sikerly, whan I was bore, anon
 Deeth drogh the tappe of lyf and leet it gon;
 And ever sith hath so the tappe y-ronne,

Til that almost al empty is the tonne.
 The streem of lyf now droppeth on the chimbe;
 The sely tonge may wel ringe and chimbe
 Of wrecchednesse that passed is ful yore;
 With olde folk, save dotage, is namore.
 Whan that our host hadde herd this sermoning,
 He gan to speke as lordly as a king;
 He seide, 'what amounteth al this wit?
 What shul we speke alday of holy writ?
 The devel made a reve for to preche,
 And of a souter a shipman or a leche.
 Sey forth thy tale, and tarie nat the tyme,
 Lo, Depeford! and it is half-way pryme.
 Lo, Grenewich, ther many a shrewe is inne;
 It were al tyme thy tale to biginne.'
 'Now, sires,' quod this Osewold the Reve,
 'I pray yow alle that ye nat yow greve,
 Thogh I answeere and somdel sette his howve;
 For leveful is with force force of-showve.
 This dronke millere hath y-told us heer,
 How that bigyled was a carpenteer,
 Peraventure in scorn, for I am oon.
 And, by your leve, I shal him quyte anoon;
 Right in his cherles termes wol I speke.
 I pray to god his nekke mote breke;
 He can wel in myn yë seen a stalke,
 But in his owne he can nat seen a balke.

THE REVES TALE.

Here biginneth the Reves tale.

At Trumpington, nat fer fro Cantebrigge,
 Ther goth a brook and over that a brigge,
 Up-on the whiche brook ther stant a melle;
 And this is verray soth that I yow telle.
 A Miller was ther dwelling many a day;
 As eny pecok he was proud and gay.
 Pypen he coude and fissue, and nettes bete,
 And turne coppes, and wel wrastle and shete;
 And by his belt he baar a long panade,
 And of a swerd ful trenchant was the blade.
 A Ioly popper baar he in his pouche;
 Ther was no man for peril dorste him touche.
 A Sheffield thwitel baar he in his hose;
 Round was his face, and camuse was his nose.
 As piled as an ape was his skulle.
 He was a market-beter atte fulle.
 Ther dorste no wight hand up-on him legge,
 That he ne swoor he sholde anon abegge.
 A theef he was for sothe of corn and mele,
 And that a sly, and usaunt for to stele.
 His name was hoten dëynous Simkin.
 A wyf he hadde, y-comen of noble kin;
 The person of the toun hir fader was.
 With hir he yaf ful many a panne of bras,

For that Simkin sholde in his blood allye.
 She was y-fostred in a nonnerye;
 For Simkin wolde no wyf, as he sayde,
 But she were wel y-norissed and a mayde,
 To saven his estaat of yomanrye.
 And she was proud, and pert as is a pye.
 A ful fair sighte was it on hem two;
 On haly-dayes biforn hir wolde he go
 With his tipet bounden about his heed,
 And she cam after in a gyte of reed;
 And Simkin hadde hosen of the same.
 Ther dorste no wight clepen hir but 'dame.'
 Was noon so hardy that wente by the weye
 That with hir dorste rage or ones pleye,
 But-if he wolde be slayn of Simkin
 With panade, or with knyf, or boydekin.
 For Ialous folk ben perilous evermo,
 Algate they wolde hir wyves wenden so.
 And eek, for she was somdel smoterlich,
 She was as digne as water in a dich;
 And ful of hoker and of bisemare.
 Hir thoughte that a lady sholde hir spare,
 What for hir kinrede and hir nortelrye
 That she had lerned in the nonnerye.
 A doghter hadde they bitwixe hem two
 Of twenty yeer, with-outen any mo,
 Savinge a child that was of half-yeer age;
 In cradel it lay and was a propre page.
 This wenche thikke and wel y-growen was,
 With camuse nose and yën greye as glas;
 With buttokes brode and brestes rounde and hye,
 But right fair was hir heer, I wol nat lye.
 The person of the toun, for she was feir,
 In purpos was to maken hir his heir
 Bothe of his catel and his messuage,
 And straunge he made it of hir mariage.
 His purpos was for to bistowe hir hye
 In-to som worthy blood of auncetrye;
 For holy chirches good moot been despended
 On holy chirches blood, that is descended.
 Therfore he wolde his holy blood honoure,
 Though that he holy chirche sholde devoure.
 Gret soken hath this miller, out of doute,
 With whete and malt of al the land aboute;
 And nameliche ther was a greet collegge,
 Men clepen the Soler-halle at Cantebregge,
 Ther was hir whete and eek hir malt y-grounde.
 And on a day it happed, in a stounde,
 Sik lay the maunciple on a maladye;
 Men wenden wisly that he sholde dye.
 For which this miller stal bothe mele and corn
 An hundred tyme more than biforn;
 For ther-biforn he stal but curteisly,
 But now he was a theef outrageously,
 For which the wardeyn chidde and made fare.

But ther-of sette the miller nat a tare;
He craketh boost, and swoor it was nat so.
Than were ther yonge povre clerkes two,
That dwelten in this halle, of which I seye.
Testif they were, and lusty for to pleye,
And, only for hir mirthe and revelrye,
Up-on the wardeyn bisily they crye,
To yeve hem leve but a litel stounde
To goon to mille and seen hir corn y-grounde;
And hardily, they dorste leye hir nekke,
The miller shold nat stele hem half a pekke
Of corn by sleighte, ne by force hem reve;
And at the laste the wardeyn yaf hem leve.
Iohn hight that oon, and Aleyn hight that other;
Of o toun were they born, that highte Strother,
Fer in the north, I can nat telle where.
This Aleyn maketh redy al his gere,
And on an hors the sak he caste anon.
Forth goth Aleyn the clerk, and also Iohn,
With good swerd and with bokeler by hir syde.
Iohn knew the wey, hem nedede no gyde,
And at the mille the sak adoun he layth.
Aleyn spak first, 'al hayl, Symond, y-fayth;
How fares thy faire doghter and thy wyf?'
'Aleyn! welcome,' quod Simkin, 'by my lyf,
And Iohn also, how now, what do ye heer?'
'Symond,' quod Iohn, 'by god, nede has na peer;
Him boës serve him-selve that has na swayn,
Or elles he is a fool, as clerkes sayn.
Our manciple, I hope he wil be deed,
Swa werkes ay the wanges in his heed.
And forthy is I come, and eek Alayn,
To grinde our corn and carie it ham agayn;
I pray yow spede us hethen that ye may.'
'It shal be doon,' quod Simkin, 'by my fay;
What wol ye doon whyl that it is in hande?'
'By god, right by the hoper wil I stande,'
Quod Iohn, 'and se how that the corn gas in;
Yet saugh I never, by my fader kin,
How that the hoper waggas til and fra.'
Aleyn answerde, 'Iohn, and wiltow swa,
Than wil I be bynethe, by my croun,
And se how that the mele falles down
In-to the trough; that sal be my disport.
For Iohn, in faith, I may been of your sort;
I is as ille a miller as are ye.'
This miller smyled of hir nycetee,
And thoghte, 'al this nis doon but for a wyle;
They wene that no man may hem bigyle;
But, by my thrift, yet shal I blere hir yë
For al the sleighte in hir philosophye.
The more queynte crekes that they make,
The more wol I stele whan I take.
In stede of flour, yet wol I yeve hem bren.
"The gretteste clerkes been noght the wysest men,"

As whylom to the wolf thus spak the mare;
 Of al hir art I counte noght a tare.'
 Out at the dore he gooth ful prively,
 Whan that he saugh his tyme, softly;
 He loketh up and doun til he hath founde
 The clerkes hors, ther as it stood y-bounde
 Bihinde the mille, under a levesel;
 And to the hors he gooth him faire and wel;
 He strepeth of the brydel right anon.
 And whan the hors was loos, he ginneth gon
 Toward the fen, ther wilde mares renne,
 Forth with wehee, thurgh thikke and thurgh thenne.
 This miller gooth agayn, no word he seyde,
 But dooth his note, and with the clerkes pleyde,
 Til that hir corn was faire and wel y-grounde.
 And whan the mele is sakked and y-bounde,
 This Iohn goth out and fynt his hors away,
 And gan to crye 'harrow' and 'weylaway!
 Our hors is lorn! Alayn, for goddes banes,
 Step on thy feet, com out, man, al at anes!
 Allas, our wardeyn has his palfrey lorn.'
 This Aleyn al forgat, bothe mele and corn,
 Al was out of his mynde his housbondrye.
 'What? whilk way is he geen?' he gan to crye.
 The wyf cam leping inward with a ren,
 She seyde, 'allas! your hors goth to the fen
 With wilde mares, as faste as he may go.
 Unthank come on his hand that bond him so,
 And he that better sholde han knit the reyne.'
 'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'Aleyn, for Cristes peyne,
 Lay doun thy swerd, and I wil myn als wa;
 I is ful wight, god waat, as is a ra;
 By goddes herte he sal nat scape us bathe.
 Why nadstow pit the capul in the lathe?
 Il-hayl, by god, Aleyn, thou is a fonnel'
 This sely clerkes han ful faste y-ronne
 To-ward the fen, bothe Aleyn and eek Iohn.
 And whan the miller saugh that they were gon,
 He half a busshel of hir flour hath take,
 And bad his wyf go knede it in a cake.
 He seyde, 'I trowe the clerkes were aferd;
 Yet can a miller make a clerkes berd
 For al his art; now lat hem goon hir weye.
 Lo wher they goon, ye, lat the children pleye;
 They gete him nat so lightly, by my croun!'
 Thise sely clerkes rennen up and doun
 With 'keep, keep, stand, stand, Iossa, warderere,
 Ga whistle thou, and I shal kepe him here!'
 But shortly, til that it was verray night,
 They coude nat, though they do al hir might,
 Hir capul cacche, he ran alwey so faste,
 Til in a dich they caughte him atte laste.
 Wery and weet, as beste is in the reyn,
 Comth sely Iohn, and with him comth Aleyn.
 'Allas,' quod Iohn, 'the day that I was born!

Now are we drive til hething and til scorn.
Our corn is stole, men wil us foles calle,
Bathe the wardeyn and our felawes alle,
And namely the miller; weylaway!’
Thus pleyneth Iohn as he goth by the way
Toward the mille, and Bayard in his hond.
The miller sitting by the fyr he fond,
For it was night, and forther mighte they noght;
But, for the love of god, they him bisoght
Of herberwe and of ese, as for hir peny.
The miller seyde agayn, ’if ther be eny,
Swich as it is, yet shal ye have your part.
Myn hous is streit, but ye han lerned art;
Ye conne by argumentes make a place
A myle brood of twenty foot of space.
Lat see now if this place may suffyse,
Or make it roun with speche, as is youre gyse.’
’Now, Symond,’ seyde Iohn, ’by seint Cutberd,
Ay is thou mery, and this is faire answerd.
I have herd seyd, man sal taa of twa thinges
Slyk as he fyndes, or taa slyk as he bringes.
But specially, I pray thee, hoste dere,
Get us som mete and drinke, and make us chere,
And we wil payen trewely atte fulle.
With empty hand men may na haukes tulle;
Lo here our silver, redy for to spende.’
This miller in-to toun his doghter sende
For ale and breed, and rosted hem a goos,
And bond hir hors, it sholde nat gon loos;
And in his owne chambre hem made a bed
With shetes and with chalons faire y-spred,
Noght from his owne bed ten foot or twelve.
His doghter hadde a bed, al by hir-selve,
Right in the same chambre, by and by;
It mighte be no bet, and cause why,
Ther was no roumer herberwe in the place.
They soupen and they speke, hem to solace,
And drinken ever strong ale atte beste.
Aboute midnight wente they to reste.
Wel hath this miller vernisshed his heed;
Ful pale he was for-dronken, and nat reed.
He yexeth, and he speketh thurgh the nose
As he were on the quakke, or on the pose.
To bedde he gooth, and with him goth his wyf.
As any Iay she light was and Iolyf,
So was hir Ioly whistle wel y-wet.
The cradel at hir beddes feet is set,
To rokken, and to yeve the child to souke.
And whan that dronken al was in the crouke,
To bedde went the doghter right anon;
To bedde gooth Aleyn and also Iohn;
Ther nas na more, hem nedede no dwale.
This miller hath so wisly bibbed ale,
That as an hors he snorteth in his sleep,
Ne of his tayl bihinde he took no keep.

His wyf bar him a burdon, a ful strong,
 Men mighte hir routing here two furlong;
 The wenche routeth eek *par companye*.
 Aleyn the clerk, that herd this melodye,
 He poked Iohn, and seyde, 'slepestow?
 Herdestow ever slyk a sang er now?
 Lo, whilk a compline is y-mel hem alle!
 A wilde fyr up-on thair bodyes falle!
 Wha herkned ever slyk a ferly thing?
 Ye, they sal have the flour of il ending.
 This lange night ther tydes me na reste;
 But yet, na fors; al sal be for the beste.
 For Iohn, seyde he, 'als ever moot I thryve,
 If that I may, yon wenche wil I swyve.
 Som esement has lawe y-shapen us;
 For Iohn, ther is a lawe that says thus,
 That gif a man in a point be y-greved,
 That in another he sal be releved.
 Our corn is stoln, shortly, it is na nay,
 And we han had an il fit al this day.
 And sin I sal have neen amendement,
 Agayn my los I wil have esement.
 By goddes saule, it sal neen other be!'
 This Iohn answerde, 'Alayn, avyse thee,
 The miller is a perilous man,' he seyde,
 'And gif that he out of his sleep abreyde,
 He mighte doon us bathe a vileinye.'
 Aleyn answerde, 'I count him nat a flye;
 And up he rist, and by the wenche he crepte.
 This wenche lay upright, and faste slepte,
 Til he so ny was, er she mighte espye,
 That it had been to late for to crye,
 And shortly for to seyn, they were at on;
 Now pley, Aleyn! for I wol speke of Iohn.
 This Iohn lyth stille a furlong-wey or two,
 And to him-self he maketh routhe and wo:
 'Allas!' quod he, 'this is a wikked Iape;
 Now may I seyn that I is but an ape.
 Yet has my felawe som-what for his harm;
 He has the milleris doghter in his arm.
 He auntred him, and has his nedes sped,
 And I lye as a draf-sek in my bed;
 And when this Iape is tald another day,
 I sal been halde a daf, a cokenay!
 I wil aryse, and auntre it, by my fayth!
 "Unhardy is unsely," thus men sayth.'
 And up he roos and softly he wente
 Un-to the cradel, and in his hand it hente,
 And baar it softe un-to his beddes feet.
 Sone after this the wyf hir routing leet,
 And gan awake, and wente hir out to pisse,
 And cam agayn, and gan hir cradel misse,
 And groped heer and ther, but she fond noon.
 'Allas!' quod she, 'I hadde almost misgoon;
 I hadde almost gon to the clerkes bed.

By, *benedicite!* thanne hadde I foule y-sped:'
And forth she gooth til she the cradel fond.
She gropeth alwey forther with hir hond,
And fond the bed, and thoughte noght but good,
By-cause that the cradel by it stood,
4225,
And niste wher she was, for it was derk;
But faire and wel she creep in to the clerk,
And lyth ful stille, and wolde han caught a sleep.
With-inne a whyl this Iohn the clerk up leep,
And on this gode wyf he leyth on sore.
So mery a fit ne hadde she nat ful yore;
He priketh harde and depe as he were mad.
This Ioly lyf han thise two clerkes lad
Til that the thridde cok bigan to singe.
Aleyn wex wery in the daweninge,
For he had swonken al the longe night;
And seyde, 'far wel, Malin, swete wight!
The day is come, I may no lenger byde;
But evermo, wher so I go or ryde,
I is thyn awen clerk, swa have I seel!'
'Now dere lemman,' quod she, 'go, far weel!
But er thou go, o thing I wol thee telle,
Whan that thou wendest homward by the melle,
Right at the entree of the dore bihinde,
Thou shalt a cake of half a bussel finde
That was y-maked of thyn owne mele,
Which that I heelp my fader for to stele.
And, gode lemman, god thee save and kepe!'
And with that word almost she gan to wepe.
Aleyn up-rist, and thoughte, 'er that it dawed,
I wol go crepen in by my felawe;
And fond the cradel with his hand anon,
'By god,' thoughte he, 'al wrang I have misgon;
Myn heed is toty of my swink to-night,
That maketh me that I go nat aright.
I woot wel by the cradel, I have misgo,
Heer lyth the miller and his wyf also.'
And forth he goth, a twenty devel way,
Un-to the bed ther-as the miller lay.
He wende have copen by his felawe Iohn;
And by the miller in he creep anon,
And caughte hym by the nekke, and softe he spak:
He seyde, 'thou, Iohn, thou swynes-heed, awak
For Cristes saule, and heer a noble game.
For by that lord that called is seint Iame,
As I have thryes, in this shorte night,
Swyved the milleres doghter bolt-upright,
Whyl thou hast as a coward been agast.'
'Ye, false harlot,' quod the miller, 'hast?
A! false traitour! false clerk!' quod he,
'Thou shalt be deed, by goddes dignitee!
Who dorste be so bold to disparage
My doghter, that is come of swich linage?'
And by the throte-bolle he caughte Alayn.

And he hente hym despitously agayn,
 And on the nose he smoot him with his fest.
 Doun ran the bloody streem up-on his brest;
 And in the floor, with nose and mouth to-broke,
 They walwe as doon two pigges in a poke.
 And up they goon, and doun agayn anon,
 Til that the miller sporned at a stoon,
 And doun he fil bakward up-on his wyf,
 That wiste no-thing of this nyce stryf;
 For she was falle aslepe a lyte wight
 With Iohn the clerk, that waked hadde al night.
 And with the fal, out of hir sleep she breyde—
 'Help, holy croys of Bromeholm,' she seyde,
In manus tuas! lord, to thee I calle!
 Awak, Symond! the feend is on us falle,
 Myn herte is broken, help, I nam but deed;
 There lyth oon up my wombe and up myn heed;
 Help, Simkin, for the false clerkes fighte.'
 This Iohn sterte up as faste as ever he mighte,
 And graspeth by the walles to and fro,
 To finde a staf; and she sterte up also,
 And knew the estres bet than dide this Iohn,
 And by the wal a staf she fond, anon,
 And saugh a litel shimering of a light,
 For at an hole in shoon the mone bright;
 And by that light she saugh hem bothe two,
 But sikerly she niste who was who,
 But as she saugh a whyt thing in hir yë.
 And whan she gan the whyte thing espye,
 She wende the clerk hadde wered a volupeer.
 And with the staf she drough ay neer and neer,
 And wende han hit this Aleyn at the fulle,
 And smoot the miller on the pyled skulle,
 That doun he gooth and cryde, 'harrow! I dye!'
 Thise clerkes bete him weel and lete him lye;
 And greythen hem, and toke hir hors anon,
 And eek hir mele, and on hir wey they gon.
 And at the mille yet they toke hir cake
 Of half a busshel flour, ful wel y-bake.
 Thus is the proude miller wel y-bete,
 And hath y-lost the grinding of the whete,
 And payed for the soper every-deel
 Of Aleyn and of Iohn, that bette him weel.
 His wyf is swyved, and his doghter als;
 Lo, swich it is a miller to be fals!
 And therfore this proverbe is seyd ful sooth,
 'Him thar nat wene wel that yvel dooth;
 A gylour shal him-self bigyled be.'
 And God, that sitteth heighe in magestee,
 Save al this companye grete and smale!
 Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

Here is ended the Reves tale.

THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.**The prologe of the Cokes Tale.**

The Cook of London, whyl the Reve spak,
 For Ioye, him thoughte, he clawed him on the bak,
 'Ha! ha!' quod he, 'for Cristes passioun,
 This miller hadde a sharp conclusioun
 Upon his argument of herbergage!
 Wel seyde Salomon in his langage,
 "Ne bringe nat every man in-to thyn hous;"
 For herberwing by nighte is perilous.
 Wel oghte a man avysed for to be
 Whom that he broghte in-to his privetee.
 I pray to god, so yeve me sorwe and care,
 If ever, sith I highte Hogge of Ware,
 Herde I a miller bettre y-set a-werk.
 He hadde a lape of malice in the derk.
 But god forbede that we stinten here;
 And therfore, if ye vouche-sauf to here
 A tale of me, that am a povre man,
 I wol yow telle as wel as ever I can
 A litel lape that fil in our citee.'
 Our host answerde, and seide, 'I graunte it thee;
 Now telle on, Roger, loke that it be good;
 For many a pastee hastow laten blood,
 And many a lakke of Dover hastow sold
 That hath been twyes hoot and twyes cold.
 Of many a pilgrim hastow Cristes curs,
 For of thy persly yet they fare the wors,
 That they han eten with thy stubbel-goos;
 For in thy shoppe is many a flye loos.
 Now telle on, gentil Roger, by thy name.
 But yet I pray thee, be nat wrooth for game,
 A man may seye ful sooth in game and pley.'
 'Thou seist ful sooth,' quod Roger, 'by my fey,
 But "sooth pley, quaad pley," as the Fleming seith;
 And ther-fore, Herry Bailly, by thy feith,
 Be thou nat wrooth, er we departen heer,
 Though that my tale be of an hostileer.
 But nathelees I wol nat telle it yit,
 But er we parte, y-wis, thou shalt be quit.'
 And ther-with-al he lough and made chere,
 And seyde his tale, as ye shul after here.

Thus endeth the Prologe of the Cokes tale.

THE COKES TALE.**Heer bigynneth the Cokes tale.**

A prentis whylom dwelled in our citee,
 And of a craft of vitaillers was he;
 Gaillard he was as goldfinch in the shawe,
 Broun as a berie, a propre short felawe,
 With lokkes blake, y-kempt ful fetisly.
 Dauncen he coude so wel and Iolily,
 That he was cleped Perkin Revelour.
 He was as ful of love and paramour

As is the hyve ful of hony swete;
 Wel was the wenche with him mighte mete.
 At every brydale wolde he singe and hoppe,
 He loved bet the taverne than the shoppe.
 For whan ther any ryding was in Chepe,
 Out of the shoppe thider wolde he lepe.
 Til that he hadde al the sighte y-seyn,
 And daunced wel, he wolde nat come ageyn.
 And gadered him a meinee of his sort
 To hoppe and singe, and maken swich disport.
 And ther they setten Steven for to mete
 To pleyen at the dys in swich a strete.
 For in the toune nas ther no prentys,
 That fairer coude caste a paire of dys
 Than Perkin coude, and ther-to he was free
 Of his dispense, in place of privetee.
 That fond his maister wel in his chaffare;
 For often tyme he fond his box ful bare.
 For sikerly a prentis revelour,
 That haunteth dys, riot, or paramour,
 His maister shal it in his shoppe abyen,
 Al have he no part of the minstralcy;
 For thefte and riot, they ben convertible,
 Al conne he pleye on giterne or ribible.
 Revel and trouthe, as in a low degree,
 They been ful wrothe al day, as men may see.
 This Ioly prentis with his maister bood,
 Til he were ny out of his prentishood,
 Al were he snibbed bothe erly and late,
 And somtyme lad with revel to Newgate;
 But atte laste his maister him bithoghte,
 Up-on a day, whan he his paper soghte,
 Of a proverbe that seith this same word,
 'Wel bet is roten appel out of hord
 Than that it rotie al the remenaunt.'
 So fareth it by a riotous servaunt;
 It is wel lasse harm to lete him pace,
 Than he shende alle the servants in the place.
 Therfore his maister yaf him acquittance,
 And bad him go with sorwe and with meschance;
 And thus this Ioly prentis hadde his leve.
 Now lat him riote al the night or leve.
 And for ther is no theef with-oute a louke,
 That helpeth him to wasten and to souke
 Of that he brybe can or borwe may,
 Anon he sente his bed and his array
 Un-to a compeer of his owne sort,
 That lovede dys and revel and disport,
 And hadde a wyf that heeld for countenance
 A shoppe, and swyved for hir sustenance.
Of this Cokes tale maked Chaucer na more.

THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.**The wordes of the Hoost to the companye.**

Our Hoste sey wel that the brighte sonne
 The ark of his artificial day had ronne
 The fourthe part, and half an houre, and more;
 And though he were not depe expert in lore,
 He wiste it was the eightetethe day
 Of April, that is messenger to May;
 And sey wel that the shadwe of every tree
 Was as in lengthe the same quantitee
 That was the body erect that caused it.
 And therfor by the shadwe he took his wit
 That Phebus, which that shoon so clere and brighte,
 Degrees was fyve and fourty clombe on highte;
 And for that day, as in that latitude,
 It was ten of the klokke, he gan conclude,
 And sodeynly he plighte his hors aboute.
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'I warne yow, al this route,
 The fourthe party of this day is goon;
 Now, for the love of god and of seint Iohn,
 Leseth no tyme, as ferforth as ye may;
 Lordinges, the tyme wasteth night and day,
 And steleth from us, what prively slepinge,
 And what thurgh negligence in our wakinge,
 As dooth the streem, that turneth never agayn,
 Descending fro the montaigne in-to playn.
 Wel can Senek, and many a philosophre
 Biwailen tyme, more than gold in cofre.
 "For los of catel may recovered be,
 But los of tyme shendeth us," quod he.
 It wol nat come agayn, with-outen drede,
 Na more than wol Malkins maydenhede,
 Whan she hath lost it in hir wantownesse;
 Lat us nat moulen thus in ydelnesse.
 Sir man of lawe,' quod he, 'so have ye blis,
 Tel us a tale anon, as forward is;
 Ye been submitted thurgh your free assent
 To stonde in this cas at my Iugement.
 Acquiteth yow, and holdeth your biheste,
 Than have ye doon your devoir atte leste.'
 'Hoste,' quod he, '*depardieux* ich assente,
 To breke forward is not myn entente.
 Biheste is dette, and I wol holde fayn
 Al my biheste; I can no better seyn.
 For swich lawe as man yeveth another wight,
 He sholde him-selven usen it by right;
 Thus wol our text; but natheles certeyn
 I can right now no thrifty tale seyn,
 But Chaucer, though he can but lewedly
 On metres and on ryming craftily,
 Hath seyde hem in swich English as he can
 Of olde tyme, as knoweth many a man.
 And if he have not seyde hem, leve brother,
 In o book, he hath seyde hem in another.

For he hath told of lovers up and doun
 Mo than Ovyde made of mencioun
 In his Epistelles, that been ful olde.
 What sholde I tellen hem, sin they ben tolde?
 In youthe he made of Ceys and Alcion,
 And sithen hath he spoke of everichon,
 Thise noble wyves and thise loveres eek.
 Who-so that wol his large volume seek
 Cleped the Seintes Legende of Cupyde,
 Ther may he seen the large woundes wyde
 Of Lucesse, and of Babilan Tisbee;
 The swerd of Dido for the false Enee;
 The tree of Phillis for hir Demophon;
 The pleinte of Dianire and Hermion,
 Of Adriane and of Isiphilee;
 The bareyne yle standing in the see;
 The dreynte Leander for his Erro;
 The teres of Eleyne, and eek the wo
 Of Brixseyde, and of thee, Lodomëa;
 The crueltee of thee, queen Medëa,
 Thy litel children hanging by the hals
 For thy Iason, that was of love so fals!
 O Ypermistra, Penelopee, Alceste,
 Your wyfhod he comendeth with the beste!
 But certainly no word ne wryteth he
 Of thilke wikke ensample of Canacee,
 That lovede hir owne brother sinfully;
 Of swiche cursed stories I sey 'fy';
 Or elles of Tyro Apollonius,
 How that the cursed king Antiochus
 Birafted his doghter of hir maydenhede,
 That is so horrible a tale for to rede,
 Whan he hir threw up-on the pavement.
 And therfor he, of ful avysement,
 Nolde never wryte in none of his sermouns
 Of swiche unkinde abhominaciouns,
 Ne I wol noon reherse, if that I may.
 But of my tale how shal I doon this day?
 Me were looth be lykned, doutelees,
 To Muses that men clepe Pierides—
Metamorphoseos wot what I mene:—
 But nathelees, I recche noght a bene
 Though I come after him with hawe-bake;
 I speke in prose, and lat him rymes make.'
 And with that word he, with a sobre chere,
 Bigan his tale, as ye shal after here.

The Prologe of the Mannes Tale of Lawe.

O hateful harm! condicion of poverté!
 With thurst, with cold, with hunger so confounded!
 To asken help thee shameth in thyn herte;
 If thou noon aske, with nede artow so wounded,
 That verray nede unwrappeth al thy wounde hid!
 Maugree thyn heed, thou most for indigence
 Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy despence!
 Thou blamest Crist, and seyst ful bitterly,

He misdeparteth richesse temporal;
 Thy neighebour thou wytest sinfully,
 And seyst thou hast to lyte, and he hath al.
 'Parfay,' seistow, 'somytyme he rekne shal,
 Whan that his tayl shal brennen in the glede,
 For he noght helpeth needfulle in hir nede.'
 Herkne what is the sentence of the wyse:—
 'Bet is to dyën than have indigence;
 Thy selve neighebour wol thee despyse;
 If thou be povre, farwel thy reverence!
 Yet of the wyse man tak this sentence:—
 'Alle the dayes of povre men ben wikke;
 Be war therfor, er thou come in that prikke!
 If thou be povre, thy brother hateth thee,
 And alle thy freendes fleeen fro thee, alas!
 O riche marchaunts, ful of wele ben ye,
 O noble, o prudent folk, as in this cas!
 Your bagges been nat filled with *ambes* as,
 But with *sis cink*, than renneth for your chaunce;
 At Cristemasse merie may ye daunce!
 Ye seken lond and see for your winninges,
 As wyse folk ye knowen al thestaat
 Of regnes; ye ben fadres of tydinges
 And tales, bothe of pees and of debat.
 I were right now of tales desolat,
 Nere that a marchaunt, goon is many a yere,
 Me taughte a tale, which that ye shal here.

THE TALE OF THE MAN OF LAWE.

Here beginneth the Man of Lawe his Tale.

In Surrie whylom dwelte a companye
 Of chapmen riche, and therto sadde and trewe,
 That wyde-wher senten her spycerye,
 Clothes of gold, and satins riche of hewe;
 Her chaffar was so thrifty and so newe,
 That every wight hath deyntee to chaffare
 With hem, and eek to sellen hem hir ware.
 Now fel it, that the maistres of that sort
 Han shapen hem to Rome for to wende;
 Were it for chapmanhode or for disport,
 Nan other message wolde they thider sende,
 But comen hem-self to Rome, this is the ende;
 And in swich place, as thoughte hem advantage
 For her entente, they take her herbergage.
 Soiourned han thise marchants in that toun
 A certain tyme, as fel to hir plesance.
 And so bifel, that the excellent renoun
 Of theperoures doghter, dame Custance,
 Reported was, with every circumstance,
 Un-to thise Surrien marchants in swich wyse,
 Fro day to day, as I shal yow devyse.
 This was the commune vois of every man—
 'Our Emperour of Rome, god him see,
 A doghter hath that, sin the world bigan,

To rekne as wel hir goodnesse as beautee,
 Nas never swich another as is she;
 I prey to god in honour hir sustene,
 And wolde she were of al Europe the quene.
 In hir is heigh beautee, with-oute pryde,
 Yowthe, with-oute grenehede or folye;
 To alle hir werkes vertu is hir gyde,
 Humblesse hath slayn in hir al tirannye.
 She is mirour of alle curteisye;
 Hir herte is verray chambre of holinesse,
 Hir hand, ministre of fredom for almesse.
 And al this vois was soth, as god is trewe,
 But now to purpos lat us turne agayn;
 Thise marchants han doon fraught hir shippes newe,
 And, whan they han this blisful mayden seyn,
 Hoom to Surrye been they went ful fayn,
 And doon her nedes as they han don yore,
 And liven in wele; I can sey yow no more.
 Now fel it, that thise marchants stode in grace
 Of him, that was the sowdan of Surrye;
 For whan they came from any strange place,
 He wolde, of his benigne curteisye,
 Make hem good chere, and bisily espye
 Tydings of sondry regnes, for to lere
 The wondres that they mighte seen or here.
 Amonges othere thinges, specially
 Thise marchants han him told of dame Custance,
 So gret noblesse in earnest, ceriously,
 That this sowdan hath caught so gret plesance
 To han hir figure in his remembrance,
 That al his lust and al his bisy cure
 Was for to love hir whyl his lyf may dure.
 Paraventure in thilke large book
 Which that men clepe the heven, y-writen was
 With sterres, whan that he his birthe took,
 That he for love shulde han his deeth, allas!
 For in the sterres, clerer than is glas,
 Is writen, god wot, who-so coude it rede,
 The deeth of every man, withouten drede.
 In sterres, many a winter ther-biforn,
 Was writen the deeth of Ector, Achilles,
 Of Pompey, Iulius, er they were born;
 The stryf of Thebes; and of Ercules,
 Of Sampson, Turnus, and of Socrates
 The deeth; but mennes wittes been so dulle,
 That no wight can wel rede it atte fulle.
 This sowdan for his privee conseil sente,
 And, shortly of this mater for to pace,
 He hath to hem declared his entente,
 And seyde hem certein, 'but he mighte have grace
 To han Custance with-inne a litel space,
 He nas but deed;' and charged hem, in hye,
 To shapen for his lyf som remedye.
 Diverse men diverse thinges seyden;
 They argumenten, casten up and doun;

Many a subtil resoun forth they leyden,
They speken of magik and abusioun;
But finally, as in conclusioun,
They can not seen in that non avantage,
Ne in non other wey, save mariage.
Than sawe they ther-in swich difficultee
By wey of resoun, for to speke al playn,
By-cause that ther was swich diversitee
Bitwene hir bothe lawes, that they sayn,
They trowe 'that no cristen prince wolde fayn
Wedden his child under oure lawes swete
That us were taught by Mahoun our prophete.'
And he answerde, 'rather than I lese
Custance, I wol be cristned doutelees;
I mot ben hires, I may non other chese.
I prey yow holde your arguments in pees;
Saveth my lyf, and beeth noght recchelees
To geten hir that hath my lyf in cure;
For in this wo I may not longe endure.'
What nedeth gretter dilatacioun?
I seye, by tretis and embassadrye,
And by the popes mediacioun,
And al the chirche, and al the chivalrye,
That, in destruccioun of Maumetrye,
And in encrees of Cristes lawe dere,
They ben acorded, so as ye shal here;
How that the sowdan and his baronage
And alle his liges shulde y-cristned be,
And he shal han Custance in mariage,
And certein gold, I noot what quantitee,
And her-to founden suffisant seurtee;
This same acord was sworn on eyther syde;
Now, faire Custance, almighty god thee gyde!
Now wolde som men waiten, as I gesse,
That I shulde tellen al the purveyance
That themperour, of his grete noblesse,
Hath shapen for his doghter dame Custance.
Wel may men knowe that so gret ordinance
May no man tellen in a litel clause
As was arrayed for so heigh a cause.
Bisshopes ben shapen with hir for to wende,
Lordes, ladyes, knightes of renoun,
And other folk y-nowe, this is the ende;
And notified is thurgh-out the toun
That every wight, with gret devocioun,
Shulde preyen Crist that he this mariage
Receyve in gree, and spede this viage.
The day is comen of hir departinge,
I sey, the woful day fatal is come,
That ther may be no lenger taryinge,
But forthward they hem dressen, alle and some;
Custance, that was with sorwe al overcome,
Ful pale arist, and dresseth hir to wende;
For wel she seeth ther is non other ende.
Allas! what wonder is it though she wepte,

That shal be sent to strange nacioun
 Fro freendes, that so tendrely hir kepte,
 And to be bounden under subieccioun
 Of oon, she knoweth not his condicioun.
 Housbondes been alle gode, and han ben yore,
 That knowen wyves, I dar say yow no more.
 'Fader,' she sayde, 'thy wrecched child Custance,
 Thy yonge doghter, fostred up so softe,
 And ye, my moder, my soverayn plesance
 Over alle thing, out-taken Crist on-lofte,
 Custance, your child, hir recomandeth ofte
 Un-to your grace, for I shal to Surryë,
 Ne shal I never seen yow more with yë.
 Allas! un-to the Barbre nacioun
 I moste anon, sin that it is your wille;
 But Crist, that starf for our redempcioun,
 So yeve me grace, his hestes to fulfille;
 I, wrecche womman, no fors though I spille.
 Wommen are born to thraldom and penance,
 And to ben under mannes governance.'
 I trowe, at Troye, whan Pirrus brak the wal
 Or Ylion brende, at Thebes the citee,
 Nat Rome, for the harm thurgh Hanibal
 That Romainys hath venquissed tymes thre,
 Nas herd swich tendre weping for pitee
 As in the chambre was for hir departinge;
 Bot forth she moot, wher-so she wepe or singe.
 O firste moevyng cruel firmament,
 With thy diurnal sweigh that crowdest ay
 And hurlest al from Est til Occident,
 That naturelly wolde holde another way,
 Thy crowding set the heven in swich array
 At the beginning of this fiers viage,
 That cruel Mars hath slayn this mariage.
 Infortunat ascendent tortuous,
 Of which the lord is helples falle, allas!
 Out of his angle in-to the derkest hous.
 O Mars, O Atazir, as in this cas!
 O feble mone, unhappy been thy pas!
 Thou knittest thee ther thou art nat receyved,
 Ther thou were weel, fro thennes artow weyved.
 Imprudent emperour of Rome, allas!
 Was ther no philosophre in al thy toun?
 Is no tyme bet than other in swich cas?
 Of viage is ther noon eleccioun,
 Namely to folk of heigh condicioun,
 Nat whan a rote is of a birthe y-knowe?
 Allas! we ben to lewed or to slowe.
 To shippe is brought this woful faire mayde
 Solempnely, with every circumstance.
 'Now Iesu Crist be with yow alle,' she sayde;
 Ther nis namore but 'farewel! faire Custance!'
 She peyneth hir to make good countenance,
 And forth I lete hir sayle in this manere,
 And turne I wol agayn to my matere.

The moder of the sowdan, welle of vyces,
Espyëd hath hir sones pleyn entente,
How he wol lete his olde sacrifyces,
And right anon she for hir conseil sente;
And they ben come, to knowe what she mente.
And when assembled was this folk in-fere,
She sette hir down, and sayde as ye shal here.
'Lordes,' quod she, 'ye knowen everichon,
How that my sone in point is for to lete
The holy lawes of our Alkaron,
Yeven by goddes message Makomete.
But oon avow to grete god I hete,
The lyf shal rather out of my body sterte
Than Makometes lawe out of myn herte!
What shulde us tyden of this newe lawe
But thraldom to our bodies and penance?
And afterward in helle to be drawe
For we reneyed Mahoun our creance?
But, lordes, wol ye maken assurance,
As I shal seyn, assenting to my lore,
And I shall make us sauf for evermore?'
They sworn and assenten, every man,
To live with hir and dye, and by hir stonde;
And everich, in the beste wyse he can,
To strengthen hir shal alle his freendes fonde;
And she hath this emprise y-take on honde,
Which ye shal heren that I shal devyse,
And to hem alle she spak right in this wyse.
'We shul first feyne us cristendom to take,
Cold water shal not greve us but a lyte;
And I shal swich a feste and revel make,
That, as I trowe, I shal the sowdan quyte.
For though his wyf be cristned never so whyte,
She shal have nede to wasshe away the rede,
Thogh she a font-ful water with hir lede.'
O sowdanesse, rote of iniquitee,
Virago, thou Semyram the secounde,
O serpent under femininitee,
Lyk to the serpent depe in helle y-bounde,
O feyned womman, al that may confounde
Vertu and innocence, thurgh thy malyce,
Is bred in thee, as nest of every vyce!
O Satan, envious sin thilke day
That thou were chased from our heritage,
Wel knowestow to wommen the olde way!
Thou madest Eva bringe us in servage.
Thou wolt fordoon this cristen mariage.
Thyn instrument so, weylawey the whyle!
Makestow of wommen, whan thou wolt begyle.
This sowdanesse, whom I thus blame and warie,
Leet prively hir conseil goon hir way.
What sholde I in this tale lenger tarie?
She rydeth to the sowdan on a day,
And seyde him, that she wolde reneye hir lay,
And cristendom of preestes handes fonge,

Repenting hir she hethen was so longe,
 Biseching him to doon hir that honour,
 That she moste han the cristen men to feste;
 'To plesen hem I wol do my labour.'
 The sowdan seith, 'I wol don at your heste,'
 And kneling thanketh hir of that requeste.
 So glad he was, he niste what to seye;
 She kiste hir sone, and hoom she gooth hir weye.

Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

Arryved ben this cristen folk to londe,
 In Surrie, with a greet solempne route,
 And hastily this sowdan sente his sonde,
 First to his moder, and al the regne aboute,
 And seyde, his wyf was comen, out of doute,
 And preyde hir for to ryde agayn the quene,
 The honour of his regne to sustene.
 Gret was the prees, and riche was tharray
 Of Surriens and Romayns met y-fere;
 The moder of the sowdan, riche and gay,
 Receyveth hir with al-so glad a chere
 As any moder mighte hir doghter dere,
 And to the nexte citee ther bisyde
 A softe pas solempnely they ryde.
 Noght trowe I the triumphe of Iulius,
 Of which that Lucan maketh swich a bost,
 Was royaller, ne more curious
 Than was thassemblee of this blisful host.
 But this scorioun, this wikked gost,
 The sowdanesse, for al hir flateringe,
 Caste under this ful mortally to stinge.
 The sowdan comth him-self sone after this
 So royally, that wonder is to telle,
 And welcometh hir with alle Ioye and blis.
 And thus in merthe and Ioye I lete hem dwelle.
 The fruyt of this matere is that I telle.
 Whan tyme cam, men thoughte it for the beste
 That revel stinte, and men goon to hir reste.
 The tyme cam, this olde sowdanesse
 Ordeyned hath this feste of which I tolde,
 And to the feste cristen folk hem dresse
 In general, ye! bothe yonge and olde.
 Here may men feste and royaltee biholde,
 And deyntees mo than I can yow devyse,
 But al to dere they boughte it er they ryse.
 O sodeyn wo! that ever art successour
 To worldly blisse, spreynd with bitternesse;
 Thende of the Ioye of our worldly labour;
 Wo occupieth the fyn of our gladnesse.
 Herke this conseil for thy sikernesse,
 Up-on thy glade day have in thy minde
 The unwar wo or harm that comth bihinde.
 For shortly for to tellen at o word,
 The sowdan and the cristen everichone
 Ben al to-hewe and stiked at the bord,
 But it were only dame Custance allone.

This olde sowdanesse, cursed crone,
Hath with hir frendes doon this cursed dede,
For she hir-self wolde al the contree lede.
Ne ther was Surrien noon that was converted
That of the conseil of the sowdan woot,
That he nas al to-hewe er he asterted.
And Custance han they take anon, foot-hoot,
And in a shippe al sterelees, god woot,
They han hir set, and bidde hir lerne sayle
Out of Surrye agaynward to Itayle.
A certain tresor that she thider ladde,
And, sooth to sayn, vitaille gret plentee
They han hir yeven, and clothes eek she hadde,
And forth she sayleth in the salte see.
O my Custance, ful of benignitee,
O emperoures yonge doghter dere,
He that is lord of fortune be thy stere!
She blesseth hir, and with ful pitous voys
Un-to the croys of Crist thus seyde she,
'O clere, o welful auter, holy croys,
Reed of the lambes blood full of pitee,
That wesh the world fro the olde iniquitee,
Me fro the feend, and fro his clawes kepe,
That day that I shal drenchen in the depe.
Victorious tree, proteccioun of trewe,
That only worthy were for to bere
The king of heven with his woundes newe,
The whyte lamb, that hurt was with the spere,
Flemer of feendes out of him and here
On which thy limes feithfully extenden,
Me keep, and yif me might my lyf tamenden.'
Yeres and dayes fleet this creature
Thurghout the see of Grece un-to the strayte
Of Marrok, as it was hir aventure;
On many a sory meel now may she bayte;
After her deeth ful often may she wayte,
Er that the wilde wawes wole hir dryve
Un-to the place, ther she shal arryve.
Men mighten asken why she was not slayn?
Eek at the feste who mighte hir body save?
And I answer to that demaunde agayn,
Who saved Daniel in the horrible cave,
Ther every wight save he, maister and knave,
Was with the leoun frete er he asterte?
No wight but god, that he bar in his herte.
God liste to shewe his wonderful miracle
In hir, for we sholde seen his mighty werkes;
Crist, which that is to every harm triacle,
By certain menes ofte, as knowen clerkes,
Doth thing for certain ende that ful derk is
To mannes wit, that for our ignorance
Ne conne not knowe his prudent purveyance.
Now, sith she was not at the feste y-slawe,
Who kepte hir fro the drenching in the see?
Who kepte Ionas in the fisshes mawe

Til he was spouted up at Ninivee?
 Wel may men knowe it was no wight but he
 That kepte peple Ebraik fro hir drenchinge,
 With drye feet thurgh-out the see passinge.
 Who bad the foure spirits of tempest,
 That power han tanoyen land and see,
 'Bothe north and south, and also west and est,
 Anoyeth neither see, ne land, ne tree?'
 Sothly, the comaundour of that was he,
 That fro the tempest ay this womman kepte
 As wel whan [that] she wook as whan she slepte.
 Wher mighte this womman mete and drinke have?
 Three yeer and more how lasteth hir vitaille?
 Who fedde the Egipcien Marie in the cave,
 Or in desert? no wight but Crist, sans faille.
 Fyve thousand folk it was as gret mervaille
 With loves fyve and fisshes two to fede.
 God sente his foison at hir grete nede.
 She dryveth forth in-to our occean
 Thurgh-out our wilde see, til, atte laste,
 Under an hold that nempnen I ne can,
 Fer in Northumberlond the wawe hir caste,
 And in the sond hir ship stiked so faste,
 That thennes wolde it noght of al a tyde,
 The wille of Crist was that she shulde abyde.
 The constable of the castel doun is fare
 To seen this wrak, and al the ship he soghte,
 And fond this very womman ful of care;
 He fond also the tresor that she broghte.
 In hir langage mercy she bisoghte
 The lyf out of hir body for to twinne,
 Hir to deliver of wo that she was inne.
 A maner Latin corrupt was hir speche,
 But algates ther-by was she understonde;
 The constable, whan him list no lenger seche,
 This woful womman broghte he to the londe;
 She kneleth doun, and thanketh goddes sonde.
 But what she was, she wolde no man seye,
 For foul ne fair, thogh that she shulde deye.
 She seyde, she was so mased in the see
 That she forgat hir minde, by hir trouthe;
 The constable hath of hir so greet pitee,
 And eek his wyf, that they wepen for routhe,
 She was so diligent, with-outen slouth,
 To serve and plesen everich in that place,
 That alle hir loven that loken on hir face.
 This constable and dame Hermengild his wyf
 Were payens, and that contree every-where;
 But Hermengild lovede hir right as hir lyf,
 And Custance hath so longe sojourned there,
 In orisons, with many a bitter tere,
 Til Iesu hath converted thurgh his grace
 Dame Hermengild, constablesse of that place.
 In al that lond no cristen durste route,
 Alle cristen folk ben fled fro that contree

Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute
The plages of the North, by land and see;
To Walis fled the cristianitee
Of olde Britons, dwellinge in this yle;
Ther was hir refut for the mene whyle.
But yet nere cristen Britons so exyled
That ther nere somme that in hir privetee
Honoured Crist, and hethen folk bigyled;
And ny the castel swiche ther dwelten three.
That oon of hem was blind, and mighte nat see
But it were with thilke yën of his minde,
With whiche men seen, after that they ben blinde.
Bright was the sonne as in that someres day,
For which the constable and his wyf also
And Custance han y-take the righte way
Toward the see, a furlong wey or two,
To pleyen and to romen to and fro;
And in hir walk this blinde man they mette
Croked and old, with yën faste y-shette.
'In name of Crist,' cryde this blinde Britoun,
'Dame Hermengild, yif me my sighte agayn.'
This lady wex affrayed of the soun,
Lest that hir housbond, shortly for to sayn,
Wolde hir for Iesu Cristes love han slayn,
Til Custance made hir bold, and bad hir werche
The wil of Crist, as doghter of his chirche.
The constable wex abasshed of that sight,
And seyde, 'what amounteth al this fare?'
Custance answerde, 'sire, it is Cristes might,
That helpeth folk out of the feendes snare.'
And so ferforth she gan our lay declare,
That she the constable, er that it were eve,
Converted, and on Crist made him bileve.
This constable was no-thing lord of this place
Of which I speke, ther he Custance fond,
But kepte it strongly, many wintres space,
Under Alla, king of al Northumberlond,
That was ful wys, and worthy of his hond
Agayn the Scottes, as men may wel here,
But turne I wol agayn to my matere.
Sathan, that ever us waiteth to bigyle,
Saugth of Custance al hir perfeccioun,
And caste anon how he mighte quyte hir whyle,
And made a yong knight, that dwelte in that toun
Love hir so hote, of foul affeccioun,
That verrailly him thoughte he shulde spille
But he of hir mighte ones have his wille.
He woweth hir, but it availleth noght,
She wolde do no sinne, by no weye;
And, for despyt, he compassed in his thoght
To maken hir on shamful deth to deye.
He wayteth whan the constable was awaye,
And prively, up-on a night, he crepte
In Hermengildes chambre whyl she slepte.
Wery, for-waked in her orisouns,

Slepeth Custance, and Hermengild also.
 This knight, thurgh Sathanas temptaciouns,
 Al softely is to the bed y-go,
 And kitte the throte of Hermengild a-two,
 And leyde the bloody knyf by dame Custance,
 And wente his wey, ther god yeve him meschance!
 Sone after comth this constable hoom agayn,
 And eek Alla, that king was of that lond,
 And saugh his wyf despitously y-slayn,
 For which ful ofte he weep and wrong his hond,
 And in the bed the bloody knyf he fond
 By dame Custance; allas! what mighte she seye?
 For verray wo hir wit was al aweye.
 To king Alla was told al this meschance,
 And eek the tyme, and where, and in what wyse
 That in a ship was founden dame Custance,
 As heer-biforn that ye han herd devyse.
 The kinges herte of pitee gan agryse,
 Whan he saugh so benigne a creature
 Falle in disese and in misaventure.
 For as the lomb toward his deeth is broght,
 So stant this innocent bfore the king;
 This false knight that hath this tresoun wroght
 Berth hir on hond that she hath doon this thing.
 But nathelees, ther was greet moorning
 Among the peple, and seyn, 'they can not gesse
 That she hath doon so greet a wikkednesse.
 For they han seyn hir ever so vertuous,
 And loving Hermengild right as her lyf.'
 Of this bar witnesse everich in that hous
 Save he that Hermengild slow with his knyf.
 This gentil king hath caught a gret motyf
 Of this witnesse, and thoghte he wolde enquere
 Depper in this, a trouthe for to lere.
 Allas! Custance! thou hast no champioun,
 Ne fighte canstow nought, so weylawey!
 But he, that starf for our redempcioun
 And bond Sathan (and yit lyth ther he lay)
 So be thy stronge champioun this day!
 For, but-if Crist open miracle kythe,
 Withouten gilt thou shalt be slayn as swythe.
 She sette her doun on knees, and thus she sayde,
 'Immortal god, that savedest Susanne
 Fro false blame, and thou, merciful mayde,
 Mary I mene, doghter to Seint Anne,
 Bfore whos child aungeles singe Osanne,
 If I be giltlees of this felonye,
 My socour be, for elles I shal dye!'
 Have ye nat seyn som tyme a pale face,
 Among a prees, of him that hath be lad
 Toward his deeth, wher-as him gat no grace,
 And swich a colour in his face hath had,
 Men mighte knowe his face, that was bistad,
 Amonges alle the faces in that route:
 So stant Custance, and loketh hir aboute.

O quenes, livinge in prosperitee,
Duchesses, and ye ladies everichone,
Haveth som routhe on hir adversitee;
An emperoures doghter stant allone;
She hath no wight to whom to make hir mone.
O blood royal, that stondest in this drede,
Fer ben thy freendes at thy grete nede!
This Alla king hath swich compassioun,
As gentil herte is fulfild of pitee,
That from his yën ran the water doun.
'Now hastily do fecche a book,' quod he,
'And if this knight wol sweren how that she
This womman slow, yet wole we us avyse
Whom that we wole that shal ben our lustyse.'
A Briton book, writen with Evangyles,
Was fet, and on this book he swoor anoon
She gilty was, and in the mene whyles
A hand him smoot upon the nekke-boon,
That doun he fil atones as a stoon,
And bothe his yën broste out of his face
In sight of every body in that place.
A vois was herd in general audience,
And seyde, 'thou hast desclaundred giltelees
The doghter of holy chirche in hey presence;
Thus hastou doon, and yet holde I my pees.'
Of this mervaille agast was al the prees;
As mased folk they stoden everichone,
For drede of wreche, save Custance allone.
Greet was the drede and eek the repentance
Of hem that hadden wrong suspeccioun
Upon this sely innocent Custance;
And, for this miracle, in conclusioun,
And by Custances mediacioun,
The king, and many another in that place,
Converted was, thanked be Cristes grace!
This false knight was slayn for his untrouthe
By Iugement of Alla hastily;
And yet Custance hadde of his deeth gret routhe.
And after this Iesus, of his mercy,
Made Alla wedden ful solempnely
This holy mayden, that is so bright and shene,
And thus hath Crist y-maad Custance a quene.
But who was woful, if I shal nat lye,
Of this wedding but Donegild, and na mo,
The kinges moder, ful of tirannye?
Hir thoughte hir cursed herte brast a-two;
She wolde noght hir sone had do so;
Hir thoughte a despit, that he sholde take
So strange a creature un-to his make.
Me list nat of the chaf nor of the stree
Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
What sholde I tellen of the royaltee
At mariage, or which cours gooth biforn,
Who bloweth in a trompe or in an horn?
The fruit of every tale is for to seye;

They ete, and drinke, and daunce, and singe, and pleye.
 They goon to bedde, as it was skile and right;
 For, thogh that wyves been ful holy thinges,
 They moste take in pacience at night
 Swich maner necessities as been plesinges
 To folk that han y-wedded hem with ringes,
 And leye a lyte hir holinesse asyde
 As for the tyme; it may no bet bityde.
 On hir he gat a knave-child anoon,
 And to a bishop and his constable eke
 He took his wyf to kepe, whan he is goon
 To Scotland-ward, his fo-men for to seke;
 Now faire Custance, that is so humble and meke,
 So longe is goon with childe, til that stille
 She halt hir chambre, abyding Cristes wille.
 The tyme is come, a knave-child she ber;
 Mauricius at the font-stoon they him calle;
 This Constable dooth forth come a messenger,
 And wroot un-to his king, that cleped was Alle,
 How that this blisful tyding is bifalle,
 And othere tydings speedful for to seye;
 He takth the lettre, and forth he gooth his weye.
 This messenger, to doon his advantage,
 Un-to the kinges moder rydeth swythe,
 And salueth hir ful faire in his langage,
 'Madame,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and blythe,
 And thanke god an hundred thousand sythe;
 My lady quene hath child, with-outen doute,
 To Ioye and blisse of al this regne aboute.
 Lo, heer the lettres seled of this thing,
 That I mot bere with al the haste I may;
 If ye wol aught un-to your sone the king,
 I am your servant, bothe night and day.'
 Donegild answerde, 'as now at this tyme, nay;
 But heer al night I wol thou take thy reste,
 Tomorwe wol I seye thee what me leste.'
 This messenger drank sadly ale and wyn,
 And stolen were his lettres prively
 Out of his box, whyl he sleep as a swyn;
 And countrefeted was ful subtilly
 Another lettre, wroght ful sinfully,
 Un-to the king direct of this matere
 Fro his constable, as ye shul after here.
 The lettre spak, 'the queen delivered was
 Of so horrible a feendly creature,
 That in the castel noon so hardy was
 That any whyle dorste ther endure.
 The moder was an elf, by aventure
 Y-come, by charmes or by sorcerye,
 And every wight hateth hir companye.'
 Wo was this king whan he this lettre had seyn,
 But to no wighte he tolde his sorwes sore,
 But of his owene honde he wroot ageyn,
 'Welcome the sonde of Crist for evermore
 To me, that am now lerned in his lore;

Lord, welcome be thy lust and thy plesaunce,
My lust I putte al in thyn ordinaunce!
Kepeth this child, al be it foul or fair,
And eek my wyf, un-to myn hoom-cominge;
Crist, whan him list, may sende me an heir
More agreable than this to my lykinge.
This lettre he seleth, prively wepinge,
Which to the messenger was take sone,
And forth he gooth; ther is na more to done.
O messenger, fulfild of dronkenesse,
Strong is thy breeth, thy limes faltren ay,
And thou biwreyest alle secreenesse.
Thy mind is lorn, thou langlest as a lay,
Thy face is turned in a newe array!
Ther dronkenesse regneth in any route,
Ther is no conseil hid, with-uten doute.
O Donegild, I ne have noon English digne
Un-to thy malice and thy tirannye!
And therfor to the feend I thee resigne,
Let him endyten of thy traitorye!
Fy, mannish, fy! o nay, by god, I lye,
Fy, *feendly* spirit, for I dar wel telle,
Though thou heer walke, thy spirit is in helle!
This messenger comth fro the king agayn,
And at the kinges modres court he lighte,
And she was of this messenger ful fayn,
And plesed him in al that ever she mighte.
He drank, and wel his girdel underpighte.
He slepeth, and he snoareth in his gyse
Al night, un-til the sonne gan aryse.
Eft were his lettres stolen everichon
And countrefeted lettres in this wyse;
'The king comandeth his constable anon,
Up peyne of hanging, and on heigh Iuſse,
That he ne sholde suffren in no wyse
Custance in-with his regne for tabyde
Thre dayes and a quarter of a tyde;
But in the same ship as he hir fond,
Hir and hir yonge sone, and al hir gere,
He sholde putte, and croude hir fro the lond,
And charge hir that she never eft come there.'
O my Custance, wel may thy goost have fere
And sleping in thy dreem been in penance,
When Donegild caste al this ordinance!
This messenger on morwe, whan he wook,
Un-to the castel halt the nexte wey,
And to the constable he the lettre took;
And whan that he this pitous lettre sey,
Ful ofte he seyde 'allas!' and 'weylawey!'
'Lord Crist,' quod he, 'how may this world endure?
So ful of sinne is many a creature!
O mighty god, if that it be thy wille,
Sith thou art rightful Iuge, how may it be
That thou wolt suffren innocents to spille,
And wikked folk regne in prosperitee?

O good Custance, allas! so wo is me
 That I mot be thy tormentour, or deye
 On shames deeth; ther is noon other weye!
 Wepen bothe yonge and olde in al that place,
 Whan that the king this cursed lettre sente,
 And Custance, with a deedly pale face,
 The ferthe day toward hir ship she wente.
 But natheles she taketh in good entente
 The wille of Crist, and, kneling on the stronde,
 She seyde, 'lord! ay wel-com be thy sonde!
 He that me kepte fro the false blame
 Why! I was on the londe amonges yow,
 He can me kepe from harme and eek fro shame
 In salte see, al-thogh I se nat how.
 As strong as ever he was, he is yet now.
 In him triste I, and in his moder dere,
 That is to me my seyl and eek my stere.'
 Hir litel child lay weping in hir arm,
 And kneling, pitously to him she seyde,
 'Pees, litel sone, I wol do thee non harm.'
 With that hir kerchef of hir heed she breyde,
 And over his litel yën she it leyde;
 And in hir arm she lulleth it ful faste,
 And in-to heven hir yën up she caste.
 'Moder,' quod she, 'and mayde bright, Marye,
 Sooth is that thurgh wommannes eggement
 Mankind was lorn and damned ay to dye,
 For which thy child was on a croys y-rent;
 Thy blisful yën sawe al his torment;
 Than is ther no comparisoun bitwene
 Thy wo and any wo man may sustene.
 Thou sawe thy child y-slayn bifor thyn yën,
 And yet now liveth my litel child, parfay!
 Now, lady bright, to whom alle woful cryën,
 Thou glorie of wommanhede, thou faire may,
 Thou haven of refut, brighte sterre of day,
 Rewe on my child, that of thy gentillesse
 Rewest on every reful in distresse!
 O litel child, allas! what is thy gilt,
 That never wroughtest sinne as yet, pardee,
 Why wil thyn harde fader han thee spilt?
 O mercy, dere Constable!' quod she;
 'As lat my litel child dwelle heer with thee;
 And if thou darst not saven him, for blame,
 So kis him ones in his fadres name!'
 Ther-with she loketh bakward to the londe,
 And seyde, 'far-wel, housbond routhlees!'
 And up she rist, and walketh doun the stronde
 Toward the ship; hir folweth al the pees,
 And ever she preyeth hir child to holde his pees;
 And taketh hir leve, and with an holy entente
 She blesseth hir; and in-to ship she wente.
 Vitailled was the ship, it is no drede,
 Habundantly for hir, ful longe space,
 And other necessities that sholde nede

She hadde y-nogh, heried be goddes grace!
 For wind and weder almighty god purchase,
 And bringe hir hoom! I can no bettre seye;
 But in the see she dryveth forth hir weye.
Explicit secunda pars. Sequitur pars tercia.
 Alla the king comth hoom, sone after this,
 Unto his castel of the which I tolde,
 And axeth wher his wyf and his child is.
 The constable gan aboute his herte colde,
 And pleynty al the maner he him tolde
 As ye han herd, I can telle it no bettre,
 And sheweth the king his seel and [eek] his lettre,
 And seyde, 'lord, as ye comaunded me
 Up peyne of deeth, so have I doon, certein.'
 This messenger tormented was til he
 Moste biknowe and tellen, plat and plein,
 Fro night to night, in what place he had leyn.
 And thus, by wit and subtil enqueringe,
 Ymaged was by whom this harm gan springe.
 The hand was knowe that the lettre wroot,
 And al the venim of this cursed dede,
 But in what wyse, certainly I noot.
 Theeffect is this, that Alla, out of drede,
 His moder slow, that men may plainly rede,
 For that she traitour was to hir ligeaunce.
 Thus endeth olde Donegild with meschaunce.
 The sorwe that this Alla, night and day,
 Maketh for his wyf and for his child also,
 Ther is no tonge that it telle may.
 But now wol I un-to Custance go,
 That fleteth in the see, in peyne and wo,
 Fyve yeer and more, as lyked Cristes sonde,
 Er that hir ship approched un-to londe.
 Under an hethen castel, atte laste,
 Of which the name in my text noght I finde,
 Custance and eek hir child the see up-caste.
 Almighty god, that saveth al mankinde,
 Have on Custance and on hir child som minde,
 That fallen is in hethen land eft-sone,
 In point to spille, as I shal telle yow sone.
 Doun from the castel comth ther many a wight
 To gauren on this ship and on Custance.
 But shortly, from the castel, on a night,
 The lordes styward—god yeve him meschaunce!—
 A thief, that had reneyed our creaunce,
 Com in-to ship allone, and seyde he sholde
 Hir lemman be, wher-so she wolde or nolde.
 Wo was this wrecched womman tho bigon,
 Hir child cryde, and she cryde pitously;
 But blisful Marie heelp hir right anon;
 For with hir strugling wel and mightily
 The thief fil over bord al sodeinly,
 And in the see he dreynte for vengeance;
 And thus hath Crist unwemmed kept Custance.
Auctor.

O foule lust of luxurie! lo, thyn ende!
 Nat only that thou feyntest mannes minde,
 But verrailly thou wolt his body shende;
 Thende of thy werk or of thy lustes blinde
 Is compleyning, how many-oon may men finde
 That noght for werk som-tyme, but for thentente
 To doon this sinne, ben outhier sleyn or shente!
 How may this wayke womman han this strengthe
 Hir to defende agayn this renegat?
 O Golias, unmesurable of lengthe,
 How mighte David make thee so mat,
 So yong and of armure so desolat?
 How dorste he loke up-on thy dredful face?
 Wel may men seen, it nas but goddes grace!
 Who yaf Iudith corage or hardinesse
 To sleen him, Olofernus, in his tente,
 And to deliveren out of wrecchednesse
 The peple of god? I seye, for this entente,
 That, right as god spirit of vigour sente
 To hem, and saved hem out of meschance,
 So sente he might and vigour to Custance.
 Forth goth hir ship thurgh-out the narwe mouth
 Of Iubaltar and Septe, dryving ay,
 Som-tyme West, som-tyme North and South,
 And som-tyme Est, ful many a wery day,
 Til Cristes moder (blessed be she ay!)
 Hath shapen, thurgh hir endeless goodnesse,
 To make an ende of al hir hevinesse.
 Now lat us stinte of Custance but a throwe,
 And speke we of the Romain Emperour,
 That out of Surrie hath by lettres knowe
 The slaughtre of cristen folk, and dishonour
 Don to his doghter by a fals traitour,
 I mene the cursed wikked sowdanesse,
 That at the feste leet sleen both more and lesse.
 For which this emperour hath sent anoon
 His senatour, with royal ordinance,
 And othere lordes, got wot, many oon,
 On Surriens to taken heigh vengeance.
 They brennen, sleen, and bringe hem to meschance
 Ful many a day; but shortly, this is thende,
 Homward to Rome they shapen hem to wende.
 This senatour repaireth with victorie
 To Rome-ward, sayling ful royally,
 And mette the ship dryving, as seith the storie,
 In which Custance sit ful pitously.
 No-thing ne knew he what she was, ne why
 She was in swich array; ne she nil seye
 Of hir estaat, althogh she sholde deye.
 He bringeth hir to Rome, and to his wyf
 He yaf hir, and hir yonge sone also;
 And with the senatour she ladde her lyf.
 Thus can our lady bringen out of wo
 Woful Custance, and many another mo.
 And longe tyme dwelled she in that place,

In holy werkes ever, as was hir grace.
The senatoures wyf hir aunte was,
But for al that she knew hir never the more;
I wol no lenger tarien in this cas,
But to king Alla, which I spak of yore,
That for his wyf wepeth and syketh sore,
I wol retourne, and lete I wol Custance
Under the senatoures governance.
King Alla, which that hadde his moder slayn,
Upon a day fil in swich repentance,
That, if I shortly tellen shal and plain,
To Rome he comth, to receyven his penance;
And putte him in the popes ordinance
In heigh and low, and Iesu Crist bisoghte
Foryeve his wikked werkes that he wroghte.
The fame anon thurgh Rome toun is born,
How Alla king shal come in pilgrimage,
By herbergeours that wenten him biforn;
For which the senatour, as was usage,
Rood him ageyn, and many of his lineage,
As wel to shewen his heighe magnificence
As to don any king a reverence.
Greet chere dooth this noble senatour
To king Alla, and he to him also;
Everich of hem doth other greet honour;
And so bifel that, in a day or two,
This senatour is to king Alla go
To feste, and shortly, if I shal nat lye,
Custances sone wente in his companye.
Som men wolde seyn, at requeste of Custance,
This senatour hath lad this child to feste;
I may nat tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, ther was he at the leste.
But soth is this, that, at his modres heste,
Biforn Alla, during the metes space,
The child stood, loking in the kinges face.
This Alla king hath of this child greet wonder,
And to the senatour he seyde anon,
'Whos is that faire child that stondeth yonder?'
'I noot,' quod he, 'by god, and by seint Iohn!
A moder he hath, but fader hath he non
That I of woot'—but shortly, in a stounde,
He tolde Alla how that this child was founde.
'But god wot,' quod this senatour also,
'So vertuous a livere in my lyf,
Ne saugh I never as she, ne herde of mo
Of worldly wommen, mayden, nor of wyf;
I dar wel seyn hir hadde lever a knyf
Thurgh-out her breste, than been a womman wikke;
Ther is no man coude bringe hir to that prikke.'
Now was this child as lyk un-to Custance
As possible is a creature to be.
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of dame Custance, and ther-on mused he
If that the childes moder were aught she

That was his wyf, and prively he sighte,
 And spedde him fro the table that he mighte.
 'Parfay,' thoghte he, 'fantome is in myn heed!
 I oghte deme, of skilful Iugement,
 That in the salte see my wyf is deed.'
 And afterward he made his argument—
 'What woot I, if that Crist have hider y-sent
 My wyf by see, as wel as he hir sente
 To my contree fro thennes that she wente?'
 And, after noon, hoom with the senatour
 Goth Alla, for to seen this wonder chaunce.
 This senatour dooth Alla greet honour,
 And hastifly he sente after Custaunce.
 But trusteth weel, hir liste nat to daunce
 Whan that she wiste wherefor was that sonde.
 Unnethe up-on hir feet she mighte stonde.
 When Alla saugh his wyf, faire he hir grette,
 And weep, that it was routhe for to see.
 For at the firste look he on hir sette
 He knew wel verrailly that it was she.
 And she for sorwe as domb stant as a tree;
 So was hir herte shet in hir distresse
 Whan she remembred his unkindenesse.
 Twyës she swowned in his owne sighte;
 He weep, and him excuseth pitously:—
 'Now god,' quod he, 'and alle his halwes brighte
 So wisly on my soule as have mercy,
 That of your harm as giltelees am I
 As is Maurice my sone so lyk your face;
 Elles the feend me fecche out of this place!'
 Long was the sobbing and the bitter peyne
 Er that hir woful hertes mighte cesse;
 Greet was the pitee for to here hem pleyne,
 Thurgh whiche pleintes gan hir wo encrease.
 I prey yow al my labour to relesse;
 I may nat telle hir wo un-til tomorwe,
 I am so wery for to speke of sorwe.
 But fynally, when that the sooth is wist
 That Alla giltelees was of hir wo,
 I trowe an hundred tymes been they kist,
 And swich a blisse is ther bitwix hem two
 That, save the Ioye that lasteth evermo,
 Ther is non lyk, that any creature
 Hath seyn or shal, whyl that the world may dure.
 Tho preyde she hir housbond mekely,
 In relief of hir longe pitous pyne,
 That he wold preye hir fader specially
 That, of his magestee, he wolde encline
 To vouche-sauf som day with him to dyne;
 She preyde him eek, he sholde by no weye
 Un-to hir fader no word of hir seye.
 Som men wold seyn, how that the child Maurice
 Doth this message un-to this emperour;
 But, as I gesse, Alla was nat so nyce
 To him, that was of so sovereyn honour

As he that is of cristen folk the flour,
Sente any child, but it is bet to deme
He wente him-self, and so it may wel seme.
This emperour hath graunted gentilly
To come to diner, as he him bisoghte;
And wel rede I, he loked bisily
Up-on this child, and on his doghter thoghte.
Alla goth to his in, and, as him oghte,
Arrayed for this feste in every wyse
As ferforth as his conning may suffyse.
The morwe cam, and Alla gan him dresse,
And eek his wyf, this emperour to mete;
And forth they ryde in Ioye and in gladnesse.
And whan she saugh hir fader in the strete,
She lighte doun, and falleth him to fete.
'Fader,' quod she, 'your yonge child Custance
Is now ful clene out of your remembrance.
I am your doghter Custance,' quod she,
'That whylom ye han sent un-to Surrye.
It am I, fader, that in the salte see
Was put allone and dampned for to dye.
Now, gode fader, mercy I yow crye,
Send me namore un-to non hethenesse,
But thonketh my lord heer of his kindenesse.'
Who can the pitous Ioye tellen al
Bitwix hem three, sin they ben thus y-mette?
But of my tale make an ende I shal;
The day goth faste, I wol no lenger lette.
This glade folk to diner they hem sette;
In Ioye and blisse at mete I lete hem dwelle
A thousand fold wel more than I can telle.
This child Maurice was sithen emperour
Maad by the pope, and lived cristenly.
To Cristes chirche he dide greet honour;
But I lete al his storie passen by,
Of Custance is my tale specially.
In olde Romayn gestes may men finde
Maurices lyf; I bere it noght in minde.
This king Alla, whan he his tyme sey,
With his Custance, his holy wyf so swete,
To Engelond been they come the righte wey,
Wher-as they live in Ioye and in quiete.
But litel whyl it lasteth, I yow hete,
Ioye of this world, for tyme wol nat abyde;
Fro day to night it changeth as the tyde.
Who lived ever in swich delyt o day
That him ne moeved outhur conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or som kin affray,
Envye, or pryde, or passion, or offence?
I ne seye but for this ende this sentence,
That litel whyl in Ioye or in plesance
Lasteth the blisse of Alla with Custance.
For deeth, that taketh of heigh and low his rente,
When passed was a yeer, even as I gesse,
Out of this world this king Alla he hente,

For whom Custance hath ful gret hevynesse.
 Now lat us preyen god his soule blesse!
 And dame Custance; fynally to seye,
 Towards the toun of Rome gooth hir weye.
 To Rome is come this holy creature,
 And fyndeth ther hir frendes hole and sounde:
 Now is she scaped al hir aventure;
 And whan that she hir fader hath y-founde,
 Doun on hir kneës falleth she to grounde;
 Weping for tendrenesse in herte blythe,
 She herieth god an hundred thousand sythe.
 In vertu and in holy almes-dede
 They liven alle, and never a-sonder wende;
 Til deeth departed hem, this lyf they lede.
 And fareth now weel, my tale is at an ende.
 Now Iesu Crist, that of his might may sende
 loye after wo, governe us in his grace,
 And kepe us alle that ben in this place! Amen.

Here endeth the Tale of the Man of Lawe; and next folweth the Shipmannes Prolog.

THE SHIPMAN'S PROLOGUE.

Here biginneth the Shipmannes Prolog.

Our hoste up-on his stiropes stood anon,
 And seyde, 'good men, herkneth everich on;
 This was a thrifty tale for the nones!
 Sir parish prest,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,
 Tel us a tale, as was thy forward yore.
 I see wel that ye lerned men in lore
 Can moche good, by goddes dignitee!' *The Persone* him answerde, '*benedicite!*
 What eyleth the man, so sinfully to swere?'
 Our hoste answerde, 'O Iankin, be ye there?'
 I smelle a loller in the wind,' quod he.
 'How! good men,' quod our hoste, 'herkneth me;
 Abydeth, for goddes digne passioun,
 For we shal han a predicacioun;
 This loller heer wil prechen us som-what.'
 'Nay, by my fader soule! that shal be nat,'
 Seyde the Shipman; 'heer he shal nat preche,
 He shal no gospel glosen heer ne teche.
 We leve alle in the grete god,' quod he,
 'He wolde sowen som difficultee,
 Or springen cokkel in our clene corn;
 And therfor, hoste, I warne thee biforn,
 My Ioly body shal a tale telle,
 And I shal clinken yow so mery a belle,
 That I shal waken al this companye;
 But it shal nat ben of philosophye,
 Ne *physices*, ne termes queinte of lawe;
 Ther is but litel Latin in my mawe.'

Here endeth the Shipman his Prolog.

THE SHIPMANNES TALE.**Here biginneth the Shipmannes Tale.**

A marchant whylom dwelled at Seint Denys,
That riche was, for which men helde him wys;
A wyf he hadde of excellent beautee,
And compaignable and revelous was she,
Which is a thing that causeth more dispence
Than worth is al the chere and reverence
That men hem doon at festes and at daunces;
Swiche salutaciouns and contenaunces
Passen as dooth a shadwe up-on the wal.
But wo is him that payen moot for al;
The sely housbond, algate he mot paye;
He moot us clothe, and he moot us arraye,
Al for his owene worship richely,
In which array we daunce lolily.
And if that he noght may, par-aventure,
Or elles, list no swich dispence endure,
But thinketh it is wasted and y-lost,
Than moot another payen for our cost,
Or lene us gold, and that is perilous.
This noble Marchant heeld a worthy hous,
For which he hadde alday so greet repair
For his largesse, and for his wyf was fair,
That wonder is; but herkneth to my tale.
Amonges alle his gestes, grete and smale,
Ther was a monk, a fair man and a bold,
I trowe of thritty winter he was old,
That ever in oon was drawing to that place.
This yonge monk, that was so fair of face,
Aqueinted was so with the gode man,
Sith that hir firste knoweliche bigan,
That in his hous as famulier was he
As it possible is any freend to be.
And for as muchel as this gode man
And eek this monk, of which that I bigan,
Were bothe two y-born in o village,
The monk him claimeth as for cosinage;
And he again, he seith nat ones nay,
But was as glad ther-of as fowel of day;
For to his herte it was a greet plesaunce.
Thus been they knit with eterne alliaunce,
And ech of hem gan other for tassure
Of bretherhede, whyl that hir lyf may dure.
Free was daun Iohn, and namely of dispence,
As in that hous; and ful of diligence
To doon plesaunce, and also greet costage.
He noght forgat to yeve the leeste page
In al that hous; but, after hir degree,
He yaf the lord, and sithe al his meynee,
When that he cam, som maner honest thing;
For which they were as glad of his coming
As fowel is fayn, whan that the sonne up-ryseth.
Na more of this as now, for it suffyseth.

But so bifel, this marchant on a day
 Shoop him to make redy his array
 Toward the toun of Brugges for to fare,
 To byën ther a porcioun of ware;
 For which he hath to Paris sent anon
 A messenger, and preyed hath daun Iohn
 That he sholde come to Seint Denys to pleye
 With him and with his wyf a day or tweye,
 Er he to Brugges wente, in alle wyse.
 This noble monk, of which I yow devyse,
 Hath of his abbot, as him list, licence,
 By-cause he was a man of heigh prudence,
 And eek an officer, out for to ryde,
 To seen hir graunges and hir bernys wyde;
 And un-to Seint Denys he comth anon.
 Who was so welcome as my lord daun Iohn,
 Our dere cosin, ful of curteisye?
 With him broghte he a Iubbe of Malvesye,
 And eek another, ful of fyn Vernage,
 And volatyl, as ay was his usage.
 And thus I lete hem ete and drinke and pleye,
 This marchant and this monk, a day or tweye.
 The thridde day, this marchant up aryseth,
 And on his nedes sadly him avyseth,
 And up in-to his countour-hous goth he
 To rekene with him-self, as wel may be,
 Of thilke yeer, how that it with him stood,
 And how that he despended hadde his good;
 And if that he encressed were or noon.
 His bokes and his bagges many oon
 He leith biforn him on his counting-bord;
 Ful riche was his tresor and his hord,
 For which ful faste his countour-dore he shette;
 And eek he nolde that no man sholde him lette
 Of his accountes, for the mene tyme;
 And thus he sit til it was passed pryme.
 Daun Iohn was risen in the morwe also,
 And in the gardin walketh to and fro,
 And hath his thinges seyde ful curteisly.
 This gode wyf cam walking prively
 In-to the gardin, ther he walketh softe,
 And him saleweth, as she hath don ofte.
 A mayde child cam in hir companye,
 Which as hir list she may governe and gye,
 For yet under the yerde was the mayde.
 'O dere cosin myn, daun Iohn,' she sayde,
 'What eyleth yow so rathe for to ryse?'
 'Nece,' quod he, 'it oghte y-nough suffyse
 Fyve houres for to slepe up-on a night,
 But it were for an old appalled wight,
 As been thise wedded men, that lye and dare
 As in a forme sit a wery hare,
 Were al for-straught with houndes grete and smale.
 But dere nece, why be ye so pale?
 I trowe certes that our gode man

Hath yow laboured sith the night bigan,
That yow were nede to resten hastily?
And with that word he lough ful merily,
And of his owene thought he wex al reed.
This faire wyf gan for to shake hir heed,
And seyde thus, 'ye, god wot al,' quod she;
'Nay, cosin myn, it stant nat so with me.
For, by that god that yaf me soule and lyf,
In al the reme of France is ther no wyf
That lasse lust hath to that sory pley.
For I may singe "allas" and "weylawey,
That I was born," but to no wight,' quod she,
'Dar I nat telle how that it stant with me.
Wherfore I thinke out of this land to wende,
Or elles of my-self to make an ende,
So ful am I of drede and eek of care.'
This monk bigan up-on this wyf to stare,
And seyde, 'allas, my nece, god forbede
That ye, for any sorwe or any drede,
Fordo your-self; but telleth me your grief;
Paraventure I may, in your meschief,
Conseille or helpe, and therfore telleth me
Al your anoy, for it shal been secree;
For on my porthors here I make an ooth,
That never in my lyf, for lief ne looth,
Ne shal I of no conseil yow biwreye.'
'The same agayn to yow,' quod she, 'I seye;
By god and by this porthors, I yow swere,
Though men me wolde al in-to peces tere,
Ne shal I never, for to goon to helle,
Biwreye a word of thing that ye me telle,
Nat for no cosinage ne alliance,
But verrailly, for love and affiance.'
Thus been they sworn, and heer-upon they kiste,
And ech of hem tolde other what hem liste.
'Cosin,' quod she, 'if that I hadde a space,
As I have noon, and namely in this place,
Than wolde I telle a legende of my lyf,
What I have suffred sith I was a wyf
With myn housbonde, al be he your cosyn.'
'Nay,' quod this monk, 'by god and seint Martyn,
He is na more cosin un-to me
Than is this leef that hangeth on the tree!
I clepe him so, by Seint Denys of Fraunce,
To have the more cause of aqueintaunce
Of yow, which I have loved specially
Aboven alle wommen sikerly;
This swere I yow on my professioun.
Telleth your grief, lest that he come adoun,
And hasteth yow, and gooth your wey anon.'
'My dere love,' quod she, 'o my daun Iohn,
Ful lief were me this conseil for to hyde,
But out it moot, I may namore abyde.
Myn housbond is to me the worste man
That ever was, sith that the world bigan.

But sith I am a wyf, it sit nat me
 To tellen no wight of our privetee,
 Neither a bedde, ne in non other place;
 God shilde I sholde it tellen, for his grace!
 A wyf ne shal nat seyn of hir housbonde
 But al honour, as I can understonde;
 Save un-to yow thus muche I tellen shal;
 As help me god, he is noght worth at al
 In no degree the value of a flye.
 But yet me greveth most his nigardye;
 And wel ye woot that wommen naturelly
 Desyren thinges sixe, as wel as I.
 They wolde that hir housbondes sholde be
 Hardy, and wyse, and riche, and ther-to free,
 And buxom to his wyf, and fresh a-bedde.
 But, by that ilke lord that for us bledde,
 For his honour, my-self for to arraye,
 A Sondag next, I moste nedes paye
 An hundred frankes, or elles am I lorn.
 Yet were me lever that I were unborn
 Than me were doon a sclandre or vileinye;
 And if myn housbond eek it mighte espye,
 I nere but lost, and therfore I yow preye
 Lene me this somme, or elles moot I deye.
 Daun Iohn, I seye, lene me thise hundred frankes;
 Pardee, I wol nat faille yow my thanks,
 If that yow list to doon that I yow praye.
 For at a certein day I wol yow paye,
 And doon to yow what plesance and servyce
 That I may doon, right as yow list devyse.
 And but I do, god take on me vengeance
 As foul as ever had Geniloun of France!’
 This gentil monk answerde in this manere;
 ‘Now, trewely, myn owene lady dere,
 I have,’ quod he, ‘on yow so greet a routhe,
 That I yow swere and plighte yow my trouthe,
 That whan your housbond is to Flaundes fare,
 I wol deliver yow out of this care;
 For I wol bringe yow an hundred frankes.’
 And with that word he caughte hir by the flanks,
 And hir embraceth harde, and kiste hir ofte.
 ‘Goth now your wey,’ quod he, ‘al stille and softe,
 And lat us dyne as sone as that ye may;
 For by my chilindre it is pryme of day.
 Goth now, and beeth as trewe as I shal be.’
 ‘Now, elles god forbede, sire,’ quod she,
 And forth she gooth, as Iolif as a pye,
 And bad the cokes that they sholde hem hye,
 So that men mighte dyne, and that anon.
 Up to hir housbonde is this wyf y-gon,
 And knokketh at his countour boldely.
 ‘*Qui la?*’ quod he. ‘Peter! it am I,’
 Quod she, ‘what, sire, how longe wol ye faste?
 How longe tyme wol ye rekene and caste
 Your sommes, and your bokes, and your thinges?

The devel have part of alle swiche rekeninges!
Ye have y-nough, pardee, of goddes sonde;
Come down to-day, and lat your bagges stonde.
Ne be ye nat ashamed that daun Iohn
Shal fasting al this day elenge goon?
What! lat us here a messe, and go we dyne.'
'Wyf,' quod this man, 'litel canstow devyne
The curious bisnesse that we have.
For of us chapmen, al-so god me save,
And by that lord that cleped is Seint Yve,
Scarsly amonges twelve ten shul thryve,
Continuelly, lastinge un-to our age.
We may wel make chere and good visage,
And dryve forth the world as it may be,
And kepen our estaat in privetee,
Til we be deed, or elles that we pleye
A pilgrimage, or goon out of the weye.
And therfor have I greet necessitee
Up-on this queinte world tavyse me;
For evermore we mote stonde in drede
Of hap and fortune in our chapmanhede.
To Flaundes wol I go to-morwe at day,
And come agayn, as sone as ever I may.
For which, my dere wyf, I thee biseke,
As be to every wight buxom and meke,
And for to kepe our good be curious,
And honestly governe wel our hous.
Thou hast y-nough, in every maner wyse,
That to a thrifty houshold may suffyse.
Thee lakketh noon array ne no vitaille,
Of silver in thy purs shaltow nat faille.'
And with that word his countour-dore he shette,
And doun he gooth, no lenger wolde he lette,
But hastily a messe was ther seyd,
And spedily the tables were y-leyd,
And to the diner faste they hem spedde;
And richely this monk the chapman fedde.
At-after diner daun Iohn sobrely
This chapman took a-part, and prively
He seyde him thus, 'cosyn, it standeth so,
That wel I see to Brugges wol ye go.
God and seint Austin spede yow and gyde!
I prey yow, cosin, wysly that ye ryde;
Governeth yow also of your diete
Atemprely, and namely in this hete.
Bitwix us two nedeth no strange fare;
Fare-wel, cosyn; god shilde yow fro care.
If any thing ther be by day or night,
If it lye in my power and my might,
That ye me wol comande in any wyse,
It shal be doon, right as ye wol devyse.
O thing, er that ye goon, if it may be,
I wolde prey yow; for to lene me
An hundred frankes, for a wyke or tweye,
For certain beestes that I moste beye,

To store with a place that is oures.
 God help me so, I wolde it were youres!
 I shal nat faille surely of my day,
 Nat for a thousand frankes, a myle-way.
 But lat this thing be secree, I yow preye,
 For yet to-night thise beestes moot I beye;
 And fare-now wel, myn owene cosin dere,
 Graunt mercy of your cost and of your chere.
 This noble marchant gentilly anon
 Answerde, and seyde, 'o cosin myn, daun Iohn,
 Now sikerly this is a smal requeste;
 My gold is youres, whan that it yow leste.
 And nat only my gold, but my chaffare;
 Take what yow list, god shilde that ye spare.
 But o thing is, ye knowe it wel y-nogh,
 Of chapmen, that hir moneye is hir plogh.
 We may creaunce whyl we have a name,
 But goldlees for to be, it is no game.
 Paye it agayn whan it lyth in your ese;
 After my might ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 Thise hundred frankes he fette forth anon,
 And prively he took hem to daun Iohn.
 No wight in al this world wiste of this lone,
 Savinge this marchant and daun Iohn allone.
 They drinke, and speke, and rome a whyle and pleye,
 Til that daun Iohn rydeth to his abbeye.
 The morwe cam, and forth this marchant rydeth
 To Flaundres-ward; his prentis wel him gydeth,
 Til he cam in-to Brugges merily.
 Now gooth this marchant faste and bisily
 Aboute his nede, and byeth and creaunceth.
 He neither pleyeth at the dees ne daunceth;
 But as a marchant, shortly for to telle,
 He let his lyf, and there I lete him dwelle.
 The Sonday next this Marchant was agon,
 To Seint Denys y-comen is daun Iohn,
 With crowne and berd all fresh and newe y-shave.
 In al the hous ther nas so litel a knave,
 Ne no wight elles, that he nas ful fayn,
 For that my lord daun Iohn was come agayn.
 And shortly to the point right for to gon,
 This faire wyf accorded with daun Iohn,
 That for thise hundred frankes he sholde al night
 Have hir in his armes bolt-upright;
 And this acord parfourned was in dede.
 In mirthe al night a bisy lyf they lede
 Til it was day, that daun Iohn wente his way,
 And bad the meynnee 'fare-wel, have good day!'
 For noon of hem, ne no wight in the toun,
 Hath of daun Iohn right no suspecioun.
 And forth he rydeth hoom to his abbeye,
 Or where him list; namore of him I seye.
 This marchant, whan that ended was the faire,
 To Seint Denys he gan for to repaire,
 And with his wyf he maketh feste and chere,

And telleth hir that chaffare is so dere,
That nedes moste he make a chevisaunce.
For he was bounde in a reconissaunce
To paye twenty thousand sheeld anon.
For which this marchant is to Paris gon,
To borwe of certein frendes that he hadde
A certein frankes; and somme with him he ladde.
And whan that he was come in-to the toun,
For greet chertee and greet affeccioun,
Un-to daun Iohn he gooth him first, to pleye;
Nat for to axe or borwe of him moneye,
But for to wite and seen of his welfare,
And for to tellen him of his chaffare,
As freendes doon whan they ben met y-fere.
Daun Iohn him maketh feste and mery chere;
And he him tolde agayn ful specially,
How he hadde wel y-boght and graciously,
Thanked be god, al hool his marchandyse.
Save that he moste, in alle maner wyse,
Maken a chevisaunce, as for his beste,
And thanne he sholde been in loye and reste.
Daun Iohn answerde, 'certes, I am fayn
That ye in hele ar comen hoom agayn.
And if that I were riche, as have I blisse,
Of twenty thousand sheeld shold ye nat misse,
For ye so kindly this other day
Lente me gold; and as I can and may,
I thanke yow, by god and by seint Iame!
But nathelees I took un-to our dame,
Your wyf at hoom, the same gold ageyn
Upon your bench; she woot it wel, certeyn,
By certein tokenes that I can hir telle.
Now, by your leve, I may no lenger dwelle,
Our abbot wol out of this toun anon;
And in his companye moot I gon.
Grete wel our dame, myn owene nece swete,
And fare-wel, dere cosin, til we mete!'
This Marchant, which that was ful war and wys,
Creaunced hath, and payd eek in Parys,
To certeyn Lumbardes, redy in hir hond,
The somme of gold, and gat of hem his bond;
And hoom he gooth, mery as a papeiay.
For wel he knew he stood in swich array,
That nedes moste he winne in that viage
A thousand frankes above al his costage.
His wyf ful redy mette him atte gate,
As she was wont of old usage algate,
And al that night in mirthe they bisette;
For he was riche and cleerly out of dette.
Whan it was day, this marchant gan embrace
His wyf al newe, and kiste hir on hir face,
And up he gooth and maketh it ful tough.
'Namore,' quod she, 'by god, ye have y-nough!'
And wantounly agayn with him she pleyde;
Til, atte laste, that this Marchant seyde,

'By god,' quod he, 'I am a litel wrooth
 With yow, my wyf, al-thogh it be me looth.
 And woot ye why? by god, as that I gesse,
 That ye han maad a maner straungenesse
 Bitwixen me and my cosyn daun Iohn.
 Ye sholde han warned me, er I had gon,
 That he yow hadde an hundred frankes payed
 By redy tokene; and heeld him yvel apayed,
 For that I to him spak of chevisaunce,
 Me semed so, as by his contenaunce.
 But nathelees, by god our hevene king,
 I thoghte nat to axe of him no-thing.
 I prey thee, wyf, ne do namore so;
 Tel me alwey, er that I fro thee go,
 If any dettour hath in myn absence
 Y-payëd thee; lest, thurgh thy necligence,
 I mighte him axe a thing that he hath payed.'
 This wyf was nat afered nor affrayed,
 But boldely she seyde, and that anon:
 'Marie, I defye the false monk, daun Iohn!
 I kepe nat of hise tokenes never a deel;
 He took me certein gold, that woot I weel!
 What! yvel thedom on his monkes snoute!
 For, god it woot, I wende, withouten doute,
 That he had yeve it me bycause of yow,
 To doon ther-with myn honour and my prow,
 For cosinage, and eek for bele chere
 That he hath had ful ofte tymes here.
 But sith I see I stonde in this disioint,
 I wol answeere yow shortly, to the point.
 Ye han mo slakker dettours than am I!
 For I wol paye yow wel and redily
 Fro day to day; and, if so be I faille,
 I am your wyf; score it up-on my taille,
 And I shal paye, as sone as ever I may.
 For, by my trouthe, I have on myn array,
 And nat on wast, bistowed every deel.
 And for I have bistowed it so weel
 For your honour, for goddes sake, I seye,
 As be nat wrooth, but lat us laughe and pleye.
 Ye shal my Ioly body have to wedde;
 By god, I wol nat paye yow but a-bedde.
 Forgive it me, myn owene spouse dere;
 Turne hiderward and maketh bettre chere.'
 This marchant saugh ther was no remedye,
 And, for to chyde, it nere but greet folye,
 Sith that the thing may nat amended be.
 'Now, wyf,' he seyde, 'and I foryeve it thee;
 But, by thy lyf, ne be namore so large;
 Keep bet our good, this yeve I thee in charge.'
 Thus endeth now my tale, and god us sende
 Taling y-nough un-to our lyves ende. Amen.

Here endeth the Shipmannes Tale.

THE PRIORESS'S PROLOGUE

**Bihold the mery wordes of the Host to the Shipman
and to the lady Prioressse.**

'Wel seyde, by *corpus dominus*,' quod our hoste,
'Now longe moot thou sayle by the coste,
Sir gentil maister, gentil marineer!
God yeve this monk a thousand last quad yeer!
A ha! felawes! beth ware of swiche a Iape!
The monk putte in the mannes hood an ape,
And in his wyves eek, by seint Austin!
Draweth no monkes more un-to your in.
But now passe over, and lat us seke aboute,
Who shal now telle first, of al this route,
Another tale;' and with that word he sayde,
As curteisly as it had been a mayde,
'My lady Prioressse, by your leve,
So that I wiste I sholde yow nat greve,
I wolde demen that ye tellen sholde
A tale next, if so were that ye wolde.
Now wol ye vouche-sauf, my lady dere?'
'Gladly,' quod she, and seyde as ye shal here.
Explicit.

THE PRIORESSES TALE.

The Prologe of the Prioresses Tale.

Domine, dominus noster.

O Lord our lord, thy name how merveillous
Is in this large worlde y-sprad—quod she:—
For noght only thy laude precious
Parfourned is by men of dignitee,
But by the mouth of children thy bountee
Parfourned is, for on the brest soukinge
Som tyme shewen they thyn heryinge.
Wherfor in laude, as I best can or may,
Of thee, and of the whyte lily flour
Which that thee bar, and is a mayde alway,
To telle a storie I wol do my labour;
Not that I may encresen hir honour;
For she hir-self is honour, and the rote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules bote.—
O moder mayde! o mayde moder free!
O bush unbrent, brenninge in Moyses sighte,
That ravisedest down fro the deitee,
Thurgh thyn humblesse, the goost that in thalighte,
Of whos vertu, whan he thyn herte lighte,
Conceived was the fadres sapience,
Help me to telle it in thy reverence!
Lady! thy bountee, thy magnificence,
Thy vertu, and thy grete humilitee
Ther may no tonge expresse in no science;
For som-tyme, lady, er men praye to thee,
Thou goost biforn of thy benignitee,
And getest us the light, thurgh thy preyere,
To gyden us un-to thy sone so dere.

My conning is so wayk, o blisful quene,
 For to declare thy grete worthinesse,
 That I ne may the weighte nat sustene,
 But as a child of twelf monthe old, or lesse,
 That can unnethes any word expresse,
 Right so fare I, and therfor I yow preye,
 Gydeth my song that I shal of yow seye.

Explicit.

Here biginneth the Prioresses Tale.

Ther was in Asie, in a greet citee,
 Amonges cristen folk, a lewerye,
 Sustened by a lord of that contree
 For foule usure and lucre of vilanye,
 Hateful to Crist and to his companye;
 And thurgh the strete men mighte ryde or wende,
 For it was free, and open at either ende.
 A litel scole of cristen folk ther stood
 Doun at the ferther ende, in which ther were
 Children an heep, y-comen of cristen blood,
 That lerned in that scole yeer by yere
 Swich maner doctrine as men used there,
 This is to seyn, to singen and to rede,
 As smale children doon in hir childhede.
 Among thise children was a widwes sone,
 A litel clergeon, seven yeer of age,
 That day by day to scole was his wone,
 And eek also, wher-as he saugh thimage
 Of Cristes moder, hadde he in usage,
 As him was taught, to knele adoun and seye
 His *Ave Marie*, as he goth by the weye.
 Thus hath this widwe hir litel sone y-taught
 Our blisful lady, Cristes moder dere,
 To worshipec ay, and he forgat it naught,
 For sely child wol alday sone lere;
 But ay, whan I remembre on this matere,
 Seint Nicholas stant ever in my presence,
 For he so yong to Crist did reverence.
 This litel child, his litel book lerninge,
 As he sat in the scole at his prymer,
 He *Alma redemptoris* herde singe,
 As children lerned hir antiphoner;
 And, as he dorste, he drough him ner and ner,
 And herkned ay the wordes and the note,
 Til he the firste vers coude al by rote.
 Noght wiste he what this Latin was to seye,
 For he so yong and tendre was of age;
 But on a day his felaw gan he preye
 Texpounden him this song in his langage,
 Or telle him why this song was in usage;
 This preyde he him to construe and declare
 Ful ofte tyme upon his knowes bare.
 His felaw, which that elder was than he,
 Answerde him thus: 'this song, I have herd seye,
 Was maked of our blisful lady free,
 Hir to salve, and eek hir for to preye

To been our help and socour whan we deye.
I can no more expounde in this matere;
I lerne song, I can but smal grammere.'
'And is this song maked in reverence
Of Cristes moder?' seyde this innocent;
'Now certes, I wol do my diligence
To conne it al, er Cristemas is went;
Though that I for my prymer shal be shent,
And shal be beten thryës in an houre,
I wol it conne, our lady for to honoure.'
His felaw taughte him homward prively,
Fro day to day, til he coude it by rote,
And than he song it wel and boldely
Fro word to word, acording with the note;
Twyës a day it passed thurgh his throte,
To scoleward and homward whan he wente;
On Cristes moder set was his entente.
As I have seyde, thurgh-out the Iewerye
This litel child, as he cam to and fro,
Ful merily than wolde he singe, and crye
O Alma redemptoris ever-mo.
The swetnes hath his herte perced so
Of Cristes moder, that, to hir to preye,
He can nat stinte of singing by the weye.
Our firste fo, the serpent Sathanas,
That hath in Iewes herte his waspes nest,
Up swal, and seide, 'o Hebraik peple, allas!
Is this to yow a thing that is honest,
That swich a boy shal walken as him lest
In your despyt, and singe of swich sentence,
Which is agayn your lawes reverence?'
Fro thennes forth the Iewes han conspyred
This innocent out of this world to chace;
An homicyde ther-to han they hyred,
That in an aley hadde a privee place;
And as the child gan for-by for to pace,
This cursed Iew him hente and heeld him faste,
And kitte his throte, and in a pit him caste.
I seye that in a wardrobe they him threwe
Wher-as these Iewes purgen hir entraille.
O cursed folk of Herodes al newe,
What may your yvel entente yow availle?
Mordre wol out, certein, it wol nat faille,
And namely ther thonour of god shal sprede,
The blood out cryeth on your cursed dede.
'O martir, souted to virginitee,
Now maystou singen, folwing ever in oon
The whyte lamb celestial,' quod she,
'Of which the grete evangelist, saint Iohn,
In Pathmos wroot, which seith that they that goon
Biforn this lamb, and singe a song al newe,
That never, fleshly, wommen they ne knewe.'
This povre widwe awaiteth al that night
After hir litel child, but he cam noght;
For which, as sone as it was dayes light,

With face pale of drede and bisy thoght,
 She hath at scole and elles-wher him soght,
 Til finally she gan so fer espye
 That he last seyn was in the Iewerye.
 With modres pitee in hir brest enclosed,
 She gooth, as she were half out of hir minde,
 To every place wher she hath supposed
 By lyklihede hir litel child to finde;
 And ever on Cristes moder meke and kinde
 She cryde, and atte laste thus she wroghte,
 Among the cursed Iewes she him soghte.
 She frayneth and she preyeth pitously
 To every Iew that dwelte in thilke place,
 To telle hir, if hir child wente oght for-by.
 They seyde, 'nay'; but Iesu, of his grace,
 Yaf in hir thought, inwith a litel space,
 That in that place after hir sone she cryde,
 Wher he was casten in a pit bisyde.
 O grete god, that parfournest thy laude
 By mouth of innocents, lo heer thy might!
 This gemme of chastitee, this emeraude,
 And eek of martirdom the ruby bright,
 Ther he with throte y-corven lay upright,
 He '*Alma redemptoris*' gan to singe
 So loude, that al the place gan to ringe.
 The Cristen folk, that thurgh the strete wente,
 In coomen, for to wondre up-on this thing,
 And hastily they for the provost sente;
 He cam anon with-outen tarying,
 And herieth Crist that is of heven king,
 And eek his moder, honour of mankinde,
 And after that, the Iewes leet he binde,
 This child with pitous lamentacioun
 Up-taken was, singing his song alway;
 And with honour of greet processoun
 They carien him un-to the nexte abbay.
 His moder swowning by the bere lay;
 Unnethe might the peple that was there
 This newe Rachel bringe fro his bere.
 With torment and with shamful deth echon
 This provost dooth thise Iewes for to sterve
 That of this mordre wiste, and that anon;
 He nolde no swich cursednesse observe.
 Yvel shal have, that yvel wol deserve.
 Therfor with wilde hors he dide hem drawe,
 And after that he heng hem by the lawe.
 Up-on his here ay lyth this innocent
 Biforn the chief auter, whyl masse laste,
 And after that, the abbot with his covent
 Han sped hem for to burien him ful faste;
 And whan they holy water on him caste,
 Yet spak this child, whan spreynd was holy water,
 And song—'*O Alma redemptoris mater!*'
 This abbot, which that was an holy man
 As monkes been, or elles oghten be,

This yonge child to coniure he bigan,
 And seyde, 'o dere child, I halse thee,
 In vertu of the holy Trinitee,
 Tel me what is thy cause for to singe,
 Sith that thy throte is cut, to my seminge?'
 'My throte is cut un-to my nekke-boon,'
 Seyde this child, 'and, as by wey of kinde,
 I sholde have deyed, ye, longe tyme agoon,
 But Iesu Crist, as ye in bokes finde,
 Wil that his glorie laste and be in minde,
 And, for the worship of his moder dere,
 Yet may I singe "*O Alma*" loude and clere.
 This welle of mercy, Cristes moder swete,
 I lovede alwey, as after my conninge;
 And whan that I my lyf sholde forlete,
 To me she cam, and bad me for to singe
 This antem verrailly in my deyinge,
 As ye han herd, and, whan that I had songe,
 Me thoughte, she leyde a greyn up-on my tonge.
 Wherfor I singe, and singe I moot certeyn
 In honour of that blisful mayden free,
 Til fro my tonge of-taken is the greyn;
 And afterward thus seyde she to me,
 "My litel child, now wol I fecche thee
 Whan that the greyn is fro thy tonge y-take;
 Be nat agast, I wol thee nat forsake."
 This holy monk, this abbot, him mene I,
 His tonge out-caughte, and took a-wey the greyn,
 And he yaf up the goost ful softly.
 And whan this abbot had this wonder seyn,
 His salte teres trikked down as reyn,
 And gruf he fil al plat up-on the grounde,
 And stille he lay as he had been y-bounde.
 The covent eek lay on the pavement
 Weping, and herien Cristes moder dere,
 And after that they ryse, and forth ben went,
 And toke away this martir fro his bere,
 And in a tombe of marbul-stones clere
 Enclosen they his litel body swete;
 Ther he is now, god leve us for to mete.
 O yonge Hugh of Lincoln, slayn also
 With cursed Iewes, as it is notable,
 For it nis but a litel whyle ago;
 Preye eek for us, we sinful folk unstable,
 That, of his mercy, god so merciable
 On us his grete mercy multiplye,
 For reverence of his moder Marye. Amen.
Here is ended the Prioresses Tale.

PROLOGUE TO SIR THOPAS.

Bihold the murye wordes of the Host to Chaucer.

Whan seyde was al this miracle, every man
 As sobre was, that wonder was to se,
 Til that our hoste Iapen tho bigan,

And than at erst he loked up-on me,
 And seyde thus, 'what man artow?' quod he;
 'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
 For ever up-on the ground I see thee stare.
 Approche neer, and loke up merily.
 Now war yow, sirs, and lat this man have place;
 He in the waast is shape as wel as I;
 This were a popet in an arm tenbrace
 For any womman, smal and fair of face.
 He semeth elvish by his contenance,
 For un-to no wight dooth he daliaunce.
 Sey now somewhat, sin other folk han sayd;
 Tel us a tale of mirthe, and that anoon;'—
 'Hoste,' quod I, 'ne beth nat yvel apayd,
 For other tale certes can I noon,
 But of a ryme I lerned longe agoon.'
 'Ye, that is good,' quod he; 'now shul we here
 Som deyntee thing, me thinketh by his chere.'
Explicit.

SIR THOPAS.

Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Thopas.

Listeth, lordes, in good entent,
 And I wol telle verrayment
 Of mirthe and of solas;
 Al of a knyght was fair and gent
 In bataille and in tourneyment,
 His name was sir Thopas.
 Y-born he was in fer contree,
 In Flaundres, al biyonde the see,
 At Popering, in the place;
 His fader was a man ful free,
 And lord he was of that contree,
 As it was goddes grace.
 Sir Thopas wex a doghty swayn,
 Whyt was his face as payndemayn,
 His lippes rede as rose;
 His rode is lyk scarlet in grayn,
 And I yow telle in good certayn,
 He hadde a semely nose.
 His heer, his berd was lyk saffroun,
 That to his girdel raughte adoun;
 His shoon of Cordewane.
 Of Brugges were his hosen broun,
 His robe was of ciclatoun,
 That coste many a Iane.
 He coude hunte at wilde deer,
 And ryde an hauking for riveer,
 With grey goshawk on honde;
 Ther-to be was a good archeer,
 Of wrastling was ther noon his peer,
 Ther any ram shal stonde.
 Ful many a mayde, bright in bour,
 They moorne for him, paramour,

Whan hem were bet to slepe;
But he was chast and no lechour,
And sweet as is the bremble-flour
That bereth the rede hepe.
And so bifel up-on a day,
For sothe, as I yow telle may,
Sir Thopas wolde out ryde;
He worth upon his stede gray,
And in his honde a launcegay,
A long swerd by his syde.
He priketh thurgh a fair forest,
Ther-inne is many a wilde best,
Ye, bothe bukke and hare;
And, as he priketh north and est,
I telle it yow, him hadde almost
Bitid a sory care.
Ther springen herbes grete and smale,
The lycorys and cetewale,
And many a clowe-gilofre;
And notemuge to putte in ale,
Whether it be moyste or stale,
Or for to leye in cofre.
The briddes singe, it is no nay,
The sparhawk and the papeiay,
That Ioye it was to here;
The thrustelcok made eek his lay,
The wodedowve upon the spray
She sang ful loude and clere.
Sir Thopas fil in love-longinge
Al whan he herde the thrustel singe,
And priked as he were wood:
His faire stede in his prikinge
So swatte that men mighte him wringe,
His sydes were al blood.
Sir Thopas eek so wery was
For prikinge on the softe gras,
So fiers was his corage,
That doun he leyde him in that plas
To make his stede som solas,
And yaf him good forage.
'O seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
What eyleth this love at me
To binde me so sore?
Me dremed al this night, pardee,
An elf-queen shal my lemman be,
And slepe under my gore.
An elf-queen wol I love, y-wis,
For in this world no womman is
Worthy to be my make
In toune;
Alle othere wommen I forsake,
And to an elf-queen I me take
By dale and eek by doune!
In-to his sadel he clamb anon,
And priketh over style and stoon

An elf-queen for tespye,
 Til he so longe had riden and goon
 That he fond, in a privee woon,
 The contree of Fairye
 So wilde;
 For in that contree was ther noon
 That to him dorste ryde or goon,
 Neither wyf ne childe.
 Til that ther cam a greet geaunt,
 His name was sir Olifaunt,
 A perilous man of dede;
 He seyde, 'child, by Termagaunt,
 But-if thou prike out of myn haunt,
 Anon I slee thy stede
 With mace.
 Heer is the queen of Fayërye,
 With harpe and pype and simphonye
 Dwelling in this place.'
 The child seyde, 'al-so mote I thee,
 Tomorwe wol I mete thee
 Whan I have myn armoure;
 And yet I hope, *par ma fay*,
 That thou shalt with this launcegay
 Abyen it ful soure;
 Thy mawe
 Shal I percen, if I may,
 Er it be fully pryde of day,
 For heer thou shalt be slawe.'
 Sir Thopas drow abak ful faste;
 This geaunt at him stones caste
 Out of a fel staf-slinge;
 But faire escapeth child Thopas,
 And al it was thurgh goddes gras,
 And thurgh his fair beringe.
 Yet listeth, lordes, to my tale
 Merier than the nightingale,
 For now I wol yow rounne
 How sir Thopas with sydes smale,
 Priking over hil and dale,
 Is come agayn to toune.
 His merie men comanded he
 To make him bothe game and glee,
 For nedes moste he fighte
 With a geaunt with hevedes three,
 For paramour and Iolitee
 Of oon that shoon ful brighte.
 'Do come,' he seyde, 'my minstrales,
 And gestours, for to tellen tales
 Anon in myn arminge;
 Of romances that been royales,
 Of popes and of cardinales,
 And eek of love-lykinge.'
 They fette him first the swete wyn,
 And mede eek in a maselyn,
 And royal spicerye;

Of gingebreed that was ful fyn,
And lycorys, and eek comyn,
With sugre that is so trye.
He dide next his whyte lere
Of clooth of lake fyn and clere
A breech and eek a sherte;
And next his sherte an aketoun,
And over that an habergeoun
For percinge of his herte;
And over that a fyn hauberk,
Was al y-wroght of Iewes werk,
Ful strong it was of plate;
And over that his cote-armour
As whyt as is a lily-flour,
In which he wol debate.
His sheeld was al of gold so reed,
And ther-in was a bores heed,
A charbocle bisyde;
And there he swoor, on ale and breed,
How that 'the geaunt shal be deed,
Bityde what bityde!'
His lambeux were of quirboilly,
His swerdes shethe of yvory,
His helm of laton bright;
His sadel was of rewel-boon,
His brydel as the sonne shoon,
Or as the mone light.
His spere was of fyn ciprees,
That bodeth werre, and no-thing pees,
The heed ful sharpe y-grounde;
His stede was al dappel-gray,
It gooth an ambel in the way
Ful softly and rounde
In londe.
Lo, lordes myne, heer is a fit!
If ye wol any more of it,
To telle it wol I fonde.
Now hold your mouth, *par charitee*,
Bothe knight and lady free,
And herkneth to my spelle;
Of bataille and of chivalry,
And of ladyes love-drury
Anon I wol yow telle.
Men speke of romances of prys,
Of Horn child and of Ypotys,
Of Bevis and sir Gy,
Of sir Libeux and Pleyn-damour;
But sir Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of royal chivalry.
His gode stede al he bistrood,
And forth upon his wey he glood
As sparkle out of the bronde;
Up-on his crest he bar a tour,
And ther-in stiked a lily-flour,
God shilde his cors fro shonde!

And for he was a knight auntrous,
 He nolde slepen in non hous,
 But liggen in his hode;
 His brighte helm was his wonger,
 And by him baiteth his dextrer
 Of herbes fyne and gode.
 Him-self drank water of the wel,
 As did the knight sir Percivel,
 So worthy under wede,
 Til on a day—

Here the Host stinteth Chaucer of his Tale of Thopas.

PROLOGUE TO MELIBEUS.

'No more of this, for goddes dignitee,'
 Quod oure hoste, 'for thou makest me
 So wery of thy verray lewednesse
 That, also wisly god my soule blesse,
 Myn eres aken of thy drasty speche;
 Now swiche a rym the devel I biteche!
 This may wel be rym dogerel,' quod he.
 'Why so?' quod I, 'why wiltow lette me
 More of my tale than another man,
 Sin that it is the beste rym I can?'
 'By god,' quod he, 'for pleynly, at a word,
 Thy drasty ryming is nat worth a tord;
 Thou doost nought elles but despendest tyme,
 Sir, at o word, thou shall no lenger ryme.
 Lat see wher thou canst tellen aught in geste,
 Or telle in prose somewhat at the leste
 In which ther be som mirthe or som doctryne.'
 'Gladly,' quod I, 'by goddes swete pyne,
 I wol yow telle a litel thing in prose,
 That oghte lyken yow, as I suppose,
 Or elles, certes, ye been to daungerous.
 It is a moral tale vertuous,
 Al be it told som-tyme in sondry wyse
 Of sondry folk, as I shal yow devyse.
 As thus; ye woot that every evangelist,
 That telleth us the peyne of Iesu Crist,
 Ne saith nat al thing as his felaw dooth,
 But natheles, hir sentence is al sooth,
 And alle acorden as in hir sentence,
 Al be ther in hir telling difference.
 For somme of hem seyn more, and somme lesse,
 Whan they his pitous passioun expresse;
 I mene of Marke, Mathew, Luk and Iohn;
 But doutelees hir sentence is al oon.
 Therfor, lordinges alle, I yow biseche,
 If that ye thinke I varie as in my speche,
 As thus, thogh that I telle som-what more
 Of proverbes, than ye han herd bifore,
 Comprehended in this litel tretis here,
 To enforce with the theffect of my matere,
 And thogh I nat the same wordes seye

As ye han herd, yet to yow alle I preye,
 Blameth me nat; for, as in my sentence,
 Ye shul not fynden moche difference
 Fro the sentence of this tretis lyte
 After the which this mery tale I wryte.
 And therfor herkneth what that I shal seye,
 And lat me tellen al my tale, I preye.'
Explicit.

THE TALE OF MELIBEUS.

Here biginneth Chaucers Tale of Melibee.

§1. A yong man called Melibeus, mighty and riche, bigat up-on his wyf that called was Prudence, a doghter which that called was Sophie.

§2. Upon a day bifel, that he for his desport is went in-to the feeldes him to pleye. His wyf and eek his doghter hath he left inwith his hous, of which the dores weren fast y-shette. Thre of his olde foos han it espyed, and setten laddres to the walles of his hous, and by the windowes been entred, and betten his wyf, and wounded his doghter with fyve mortal woundes in fyve sondry places; this is to seyn, in hir feet, in hir handes, in hir eres, in hir nose, and in hir mouth; and leften hir for deed, and wenten away.

§3. Whan Melibeus retourned was in-to his hous, and saugh al this meschief, he, lyk a mad man, rendinge his clothes, gan to wepe and crye.

§4. Prudence his wyf, as ferforth as she dorste, bisoghte him of his weping for to stinte; but nat for-thy he gan to crye and wepen ever lenger the more.

§5. This noble wyf Prudence remembered hir upon the sentence of Ovide, in his book that cleped is The Remedie of Love, wher-as he seith; 'he is a fool that destourbeth the moder to wepen in the deeth of hir child, til she have wept hir fille, as for a certain tyme; and thanne shal man doon his diligence with amiable wordes hir to reconforte, and preyen hir of hir weping for to stinte.' For which resoun this noble wyf Prudence suffred hir housbond for to wepe and crye as for a certein space; and whan she saugh hir tyme, she seyde him in this wyse. 'Allas, my lord,' quod she, 'why make ye your-self for to be lyk a fool? For sothe, it aperteneth nat to a wys man, to maken swiche a sorwe. Your doghter, with the grace of god, shal warisshe and escape. And al were it so that she right now were deed, ye ne oghte nat as for hir deeth your-self to destroye. Senek seith: "the wise man shal nat take to greet discomfort for the deeth of his children, but certes he sholde suffren it in pacience, as wel as he abydeh the deeth of his owene propre persone."'

§6. This Melibeus answerde anon and seyde, 'What man,' quod he, 'sholde of his weping stinte, that hath so greet a cause for to wepe? Iesu Crist, our lord, him-self wepte for the deeth of Lazarus his freend.' Prudence answerde, 'Certes, wel I woot, attempree weping is no-thing defended to him that sorweful is, amonges folk in sorwe, but it is rather graunted him to wepe. The Apostle Paul un-to the Romayns wryteth, "man shal reioyse with hem that maken Ioye, and wepen with swich folk as wepen." But thogh attempree weping be y-graunted, outrageous weping certes is defended. Mesure of weping sholde be considered, after the lore that techeth us Senek. "Whan that thy freend is deed," quod he, "lat nat thyne eyen to moyste been of teres, ne to muche drye; although the teres come to thyne eyen, lat hem nat falle." And whan thou hast for-goon thy freend, do diligence to gete another freend; and this is more wysdom than for to wepe for thy freend which that thou hast lorn; for ther-inne is no bote. And therefore, if ye governe yow by sapience, put away sorwe out of your herte. Remembre yow that Iesus Syrak seith: "a man that is Ioyous and glad in herte, it him conserveth florissching in his age; but soothly sorweful herte maketh his bones drye." He seith eek thus: "that sorwe in herte sleeth ful many a man." Salomon seith: "that, right as motthes in the shepes flees anoyeth to the clothes, and the smale wormes to the tree, right so anoyeth sorwe to the herte." Wherefore us oghte, as wel in the deeth of our children as in the losse of our goodes temporels, have pacience.

§7. Remembre yow up-on the pacient Iob, whan he hadde lost his children and his temporel substance, and in his body endured and receyved ful many a grevous tribulacioun; yet seyde he thus: "our lord hath yeven it me, our lord hath biraft it me; right as our lord hath wold, right so it is doon; blessed be the name of our lord." To thise foreseide thinges answerde Melibeus un-to his wyf Prudence: 'Alle

thy wordes,' quod he, 'been sothe, and ther-to profitable; but trewely myn herte is troubled with this sorwe so greuously, that I noot what to done.' 'Lat calle,' quod Prudence, 'thy trewe freendes alle, and thy linage whiche that been wyse; telleth your cas, and herkneth what they seye in conseiling, and yow governe after hir sentence. Salomon seith: "werk alle thy thinges by conseil, and thou shalt never repente."' "

§8. Thanne, by the conseil of his wyf Prudence, this Melibeus leet callen a greet congregacioun of folk; as surgiens, phisiciens, olde folk and yonge, and somme of hise olde enemys reconciled as by hir semblaunt to his love and in-to his grace; and ther-with-al ther comen somme of hise neighebores that diden him reverence more for drede than for love, as it happeth ofte. Ther comen also ful many subtil flatereres, and wyse advocats lerned in the lawe.

§9. And whan this folk togidre assembled weren, this Melibeus in sorweful wyse shewed hem his cas; and by the manere of his speche it semed that in herte he bar a cruel ire, redy to doon vengeance up-on hise foos, and sodeynly desired that the werre sholde biginne; but natheles yet axed he hir conseil upon this matere. A surgien, by licence and assent of swiche as weren wyse, up roos and un-to Melibeus seyde as ye may here.

§10. 'Sir,' quod he, 'as to us surgiens aperteneth, that we do to every wight the beste that we can, wher-as we been with-holde, and to our pacients that we do no damage; wherfore it happeth, many tyme and ofte, that whan twey men han everich wounded other, oon same surgien heleth hem bothe; wherfore un-to our art it is nat pertinent to norice werre, ne parties to supporte. But certes, as to the warisshinge of your doghter, al-be-it so that she perilously be wounded, we shullen do so ententif bisnesse fro day to night, that with the grace of god she shal be hool and sound as sone as is possible.' Almost right in the same wyse the phisiciens answerden, save that they seyden a fewe wordes more: 'That, right as maladyes been cured by hir contraries, right so shul men warisshe werre by vengeance.' His neighebores, ful of envye, his feyned freendes that semeden reconciled, and his flatereres, maden semblant of weping, and empeireden and agreggeden muchel of this matere, in preising greetly Melibee of might, of power, of richesse, and of freendes, despysinge the power of his adversaries, and seiden outrely that he anon sholde wreken him on his foos and biginne werre.

§11. Up roos thanne an advocat that was wys, by leve and by conseil of othere that were wyse, and seyde: 'Lordinges, the nede for which we been assembled in this place is a ful hevy thing and an heigh matere, by-cause of the wrong and of the wikkednesse that hath be doon, and eek by resoun of the grete damages that in tyme cominge been possible to fallen for this same cause; and eek by resoun of the grete richesse and power of the parties bothe; for the whiche resouns it were a ful greet peril to erren in this matere. Wherfore, Melibeus, this is our sentence: we conseilte yow aboven alle thing, that right anon thou do thy diligence in kepinge of thy propre persone, in swich a wyse that thou ne wante noon espye ne wacche, thy body for to save. And after that we conseilte, that in thyn hous thou sette suffisant garnisoun, so that they may as wel thy body as thyn hous defende. But certes, for to moeve werre, or sodeynly for to doon vengeance, we may nat demen in so litel tyme that it were profitable. Wherfore we axen leyser and espace to have deliberacioun in this cas to deme. For the commune proverbe seith thus: "he that sone demeth, sone shal repente." And eek men seyn that thilke Iuge is wys, that sone understandeth a matere and Iuggeth by leyser. For al-be-it so that alle taryng be anyful, algates it is nat to repreve in yevynge of Iugement, ne in vengeance-taking, whan it is suffisant and resonable. And that shewed our lord Iesu Crist by ensample; for whan that the womman that was taken in avoutrie was broght in his presence, to knowen what sholde be doon with hir persone, al-be-it so that he wiste wel him-self what that he wolde answer, yet ne wolde he nat answer sodeynly, but he wolde have deliberacioun, and in the ground he wroot twyes. And by thise causes we axen deliberacioun, and we shal thanne, by the grace of god, conseilte thee thing that shal be profitable.'

§12. Up stirten thanne the yonge folk at-ones, and the moste partie of that companye han scorned the olde wyse men, and bigonnen to make noyse, and seyden: that, right so as whyl that iren is hoot, men sholden smyte, right so, men sholde wreken hir wronges whyle that they been fresshe and newe; and with loud voys they cryden, 'werre! werre!'

Up roos tho oon of thise olde wyse, and with his hand made contenance that men sholde holden hem stille and yeven him audience. 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'ther is ful many a man that cryeth "werre! werre!" that woot ful litel what werre amounteth. Werre at his biginning hath so greet an entree and so large, that every wight may entre whan him lyketh, and lightly finde werre. But, certes, what ende that shal

ther-of bifalle, it is nat light to knowe. For sothly, whan that werre is ones bigonne, ther is ful many a child unborn of his moder, that shal sterve yong by-cause of that ilke werre, or elles live in sorwe and dye in wrecchednesse. And ther-fore, er that any werre biginne, men moste have greet conseil and greet deliberacioun.' And whan this olde man wende to enforcen his tale by reson, wel ny alle at-ones bigonne they to ryse for to breken his tale, and beden him ful ofte his wordes for to abregge. For soothly, he that precheth to hem that listen nat heren his wordes, his sermon hem anoyeth. For Iesus Syrak seith: that "musik in wepinge is anoyous thing;" this is to seyn: as muche availleth to speken biforn folk to whiche his speche anoyeth, as dooth to singe biforn him that wepeth. And whan this wyse man saugh that him wanted audience, al shamefast he sette him doun agayn. For Salomon seith: "ther-as thou ne mayst have noon audience, enforce thee nat to speke." 'I see wel,' quod this wyse man, 'that the commune proverbe is sooth; that "good conseil wanteth whan it is most nede."'

§13. Yet hadde this Melibeus in his conseil many folk, that prively in his ere counselled him certeyn thing, and counselled him the contrarie in general audience.

Whan Melibeus hadde herd that the gretteste partie of his conseil weren accorded that he sholde maken werre, anon he consented to hir conseil, and fully affermed hir sentence. Thanne dame Prudence, whan that she saugh how that hir housbonde shoop him for to wreken him on his foos, and to biginne werre, she in ful humble wyse, when she saugh hir tyme, seide him thise wordes: 'My lord,' quod she, 'I yow biseche as hertely as I dar and can, ne haste yow nat to faste, and for alle guerdons as yeveth me audience. For Piers Alfonse seith: "who-so that dooth to that other good or harm, haste thee nat to quytten it; for in this wyse thy freend wol abyde, and thyn enemy shal the lenger live in drede." The proverbe seith: "he hasteth wel that wysely can abyde;" and in wikked haste is no profit.'

§14. This Melibee answerde un-to his wyf Prudence: 'I purpose nat,' quod he, 'to werke by thy conseil, for many causes and resouns. For certes every wight wolde holde me thanne a fool; this is to seyn, if I, for thy conseil, wolde chaungen thinges that been ordeyned and affermed by so manye wyse. Secoundly I seye, that alle wommen been wikke and noon good of hem alle. For "of a thousand men," seith Salomon, "I fond a good man: but certes, of alle wommen, good womman fond I never." And also certes, if I governed me by thy conseil, it sholde seme that I hadde yeve to thee over me the maistrie; and god forbode that it so were. For Iesus Syrak seith; "that if the wyf have maistrie, she is contrarious to hir housbonde." And Salomon seith: "never in thy lyf, to thy wyf, ne to thy child, ne to thy freend, ne yeve no power over thy-self. For bettre it were that thy children aske of thy persone thinges that hem nedeth, than thou see thy-self in the handes of thy children." And also, if I wolde werke by thy conseil, certes my conseil moste som tyme be secree, til it were tyme that it moste be knowe; and this ne may nocht be. [For it is writen, that "the Ianglerie of wommen can hyden thinges that they witen nocht." Furthermore, the philosophre seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" and for thise resouns I ne owe nat usen thy conseil.']

§15. Whanne dame Prudence, ful debonairly and with greet pacionce, hadde herd al that hir housbonde lyked for to seye, thanne axed she of him licence for to speke, and seyde in this wyse. 'My lord,' quod she, 'as to your firste resoun, certes it may lightly been answered. For I seye, that it is no folie to chaunge conseil whan the thing is chaunged; or elles whan the thing semeth otherweyes than it was biforn. And more-over I seye, that though ye han sworn and bihight to perfourne your emprise, and natheles ye weyve to perfourne thilke same emprise by Iuste cause, men sholde nat seyn therefore that ye were a lyer ne forsworn. For the book seith, that "the wyse man maketh no lesing whan he turneth his corage to the bettre." And al-be-it so that your emprise be establissed and ordeyned by greet multitude of folk, yet thar ye nat accomplice thilke same ordinaunce but yow lyke. For the trouthe of thinges and the profit been rather founden in fewe folk that been wyse and ful of resoun, than by greet multitude of folk, ther every man cryeth and clatereth what that him lyketh. Soothly swich multitude is nat honeste. As to the seconde resoun, where-as ye seyn that "alle wommen been wikke," save your grace, certes ye despyse alle wommen in this wyse; and "he that alle despyseth alle displeseth," as seith the book. And Senek seith that "who-so wole have sapience, shal no man dispreise; but he shal gladly techen the science that he can, with-outen presumpcioun or pryde. And swiche thinges as he nought ne can, he shal nat been ashamed to lerne hem and enquire of lasse folk than him-self." And sir, that ther hath been many a good womman, may lightly be preved. For certes, sir, our lord Iesu Crist wolde never have descended to be born of a womman, if alle wommen hadden ben wikke. And after that, for the grete bountee that is in wommen, our lord Iesu Crist, whan he was risen fro deeth to lyve, appeered rather to a womman than to his apostles. And though that

Salomon seith, that "he ne fond never womman good," it folweth nat therfore that alle wommen ben wikke. For though that he ne fond no good womman, certes, ful many another man hath founden many a womman ful good and trewe. Or elles per-aventure the entente of Salomon was this; that, as in sovereyn bountee, he fond no womman; this is to seyn, that ther is no wight that hath sovereyn bountee save god allone; as he him-self recordeth in his Evaungelie. For ther nis no creature so good that him ne wanteth somewhat of the perfeccioun of god, that is his maker. Your thridde resoun is this: ye seyn that "if ye governe yow by my conseil, it sholde seme that ye hadde yeve me the maistrie and the lordshipe over your persone." Sir, save your grace, it is nat so. For if it were so, that no man sholde be conseilled but only of hem that hadden lordshipe and maistrie of his persone, men wolden nat be conseilled so ofte. For soothly, thilke man that asketh conseil of a purpos, yet hath he free choys, wheither he wole werke by that conseil or noon. And as to your fourthe resoun, ther ye seyn that "the Ianglerie of wommen hath hid thinges that they woot noght," as who seith, that "a womman can nat hyde that she woot;" sir, these wordes been understonde of wommen that been Iangleresses and wikked; of whiche wommen, men seyn that "three thinges dryven a man out of his hous; that is to seyn, smoke, dropping of reyn, and wikked wyves;" and of swiche wommen seith Salomon, that "it were better dwelle in desert, than with a womman that is riotous." And sir, by your leve, that am nat I; for ye han ful ofte assayed my grete silence and my gret pacience; and eek how wel that I can hyde and hele thinges that men oghte secreely to hyde. And soothly, as to your fifthe resoun, wher-as ye seyn, that "in wikked conseil wommen venquisshe men;" god woot, thilke resoun stant here in no stede. For understand now, ye asken conseil to do wikkednesse; and if ye wole werken wikkednesse, and your wyf restreyneth thilke wikked purpos, and overcometh yow by resoun and by good conseil; certes, your wyf oghte rather to be preised than y-blamed. Thus sholde ye understonde the philosophre that seith, "in wikked conseil wommen venquisschen hir housbondes." And ther-as ye blamen alle wommen and hir resouns, I shal shewe yow by manye ensamples that many a womman hath ben ful good, and yet been; and hir conseils ful hoolsome and profitable. Eek som men han seyde, that "the conseillinge of wommen is outhere to dere, or elles to litel of prys." But al-be-it so, that ful many a womman is badde, and hir conseil vile and noght worth, yet han men founde ful many a good womman, and ful discrete and wise in conseillinge. Lo, Iacob, by good conseil of his moder Rebekka, wan the benisoun of Ysaak his fader, and the lordshipe over alle his bretheren. Iudith, by hir good conseil, delivered the citee of Bethulie, in which she dwelled, out of the handes of Olofernus, that hadde it biseged and wolde have al destroyed it. Abigail delivered Nabal hir housbonde fro David the king, that wolde have slayn him, and apaysed the ire of the king by hir wit and by hir good conseilling. Hester by hir good conseil enhaunced greetly the peple of god in the regne of Assuerus the king. And the same bountee in good conseilling of many a good womman may men telle. And moreover, whan our lord hadde creat Adam our forme-fader, he seyde in this wyse: "it is nat good to been a man allone; make we to him an help semblable to himself." Here may ye se that, if that wommen were nat goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable, our lord god of hevene wolde never han wrought hem, ne called hem help of man, but rather confusioun of man. And ther seyde ones a clerk in two vers: "what is better than gold? Iaspre. What is better than Iaspre? Wisdom. And what is better than wisdom? Womman. And what is better than a good womman? No-thing." And sir, by manye of othre resons may ye seen, that manye wommen been goode, and hir conseils goode and profitable. And therfore sir, if ye wol triste to my conseil, I shal restore yow your doghter hool and sound. And eek I wol do to yow so muche, that ye shul have honour in this cause.'

§16. Whan Melibee hadde herd the wordes of his wyf Prudence, he seyde thus: 'I se wel that the word of Salomon is sooth; he seith, that "wordes that been spoken discretly by ordinaunce, been honycombes; for they even swetnesse to the soule, and hoolsomnesse to the body." And wyf, by-cause of thy swete wordes, and eek for I have assayed and preved thy grete sapience and thy grete trouthe, I wol governe me by thy conseil in alle thing.'

§17. 'Now sir,' quod dame Prudence, 'and sin ye vouche-sauf to been governed by my conseil, I wol enforme yow how ye shul governe your-self in chesinge of your conseilours. Ye shul first, in alle your werkes, mekely biseken to the heighe god that he wol be your conseilour; and shapeth yow to swich entente, that he yeve yow conseil and confort, as taughte Thobie his sone. "At alle tymes thou shalt blesse god, and praye him to dresse thy weyes"; and looke that alle thy conseils been in him for evermore. Seint Iame eek seith: "if any of yow have nede of sapience, axe it of god." And afterward thanne shul ye taken conseil in your-self, and examine wel your thoghtes, of swich thing as

yow thinketh that is best for your profit. And thanne shul ye dryve fro your herte three things that been contrariouse to good conseil, that is to seyn, ire, coveitise, and hastifnesse.

§18. First, he that axeth conseil of him-self, certes he moste been with-outen ire, for manye causes. The firste is this: he that hath greet ire and wratthe in him-self, he weneth alwey that he may do thing that he may nat do. And secoundely, he that is irous and wroth, he ne may nat wel deme; and he that may nat wel deme, may nat wel conseil. The thridde is this; that "he that is irous and wrooth," as seith Senek, "ne may nat speke but he blame thinges;" and with his viciouse wordes he stireth other folk to angre and to ire. And eek sir, ye moste dryve coveitise out of your herte. For the apostle seith, that "coveitise is rote of alle harmes." And trust wel that a coveitous man ne can noght deme ne thinke, but only to fulfille the ende of his coveitise; and certes, that ne may never been accompliced; for ever the more habundaunce that he hath of riches, the more he desyareth. And sir, ye moste also dryve out of your herte hastifnesse; for certes, ye ne may nat deme for the beste a sodeyn thought that falleth in youre herte, but ye moste avyse yow on it ful ofte. For as ye herde biforn, the commune proverbe is this, that "he that sone demeth, sone repenteth."

§19. Sir, ye ne be nat alwey in lyke disposicioun; for certes, som thing that somtyme semeth to yow that it is good for to do, another tyme it semeth to yow the contrarie.

§20. Whan ye han taken conseil in your-self, and han demed by good deliberacion swich thing as you semeth best, thanne rede I yow, that ye kepe it secree. Biwrey nat your conseil to no persone, but-if so be that ye wenen sikerly that, thurgh your biwreying, your condicioun shal be to yow the more profitable. For Iesus Syrak seith: "neither to thy foo ne to thy freend discovere nat thy secree ne thy folie; for they wol yeve yow audience and loking and supportacioun in thy presence, and scorne thee in thyn absence." Another clerk seith, that "scarsly shaltou finden any persone that may kepe conseil secreely." The book seith: "whyl that thou kepest thy conseil in thyn herte, thou kepest it in thy prisoun: and whan thou biwreyest thy conseil to any wight, he holdeth thee in his snare." And therefore yow is better to hyde your conseil in your herte, than praye him, to whom ye han biwreyed your conseil, that he wole kepen it cloos and stille. For Seneca seith: "if so be that thou ne mayst nat thyn owene conseil hyde, how darstou prayen any other wight thy conseil secreely to kepe?" But nathelees, if thou wene sikerly that the biwreying of thy conseil to a persone wol make thy condicioun to stonden in the better plyt, thanne shaltou tellen him thy conseil in this wyse. First, thou shalt make no semblant whether thee were lever pees or werre, or this or that, ne shewe him nat thy wille and thyn entente; for trust wel, that comunly thise conseilours been flatereres, namely the conseilours of grete lordes; for they enforcen hem alwey rather to speken plesante wordes, enclynge to the lordes lust, than wordes that been trewe or profitable. And therefore men seyn, that "the riche man hath sold good conseil but-if he have it of him-self." And after that, thou shalt considere thy freendes and thyne enemys. And as touchinge thy freendes, thou shalt considere whiche of hem been most faithful and most wyse, and eldest and most approved in conseil. And of hem shalt thou aske thy conseil, as the caas requireth.

§21. I seye that first ye shul clepe to your conseil your freendes that been trewe. For Salomon seith: that "right as the herte of a man delyteth in savour that is sote, right so the conseil of trewe freendes yeveth swetenesse to the soule." He seith also: "ther may no-thing be lykned to the trewe freend." For certes, gold ne silver beth nat so muche worth as the gode wil of a trewe freend. And eek he seith, that "a trewe freend is a strong deffense; who-so that it findeth, certes he findeth a greet tresour." Thanne shul ye eek considere, if that your trewe freendes been discrete and wyse. For the book seith: "axe alwey thy conseil of hem that been wyse." And by this same resoun shul ye clepen to your conseil, of your freendes that been of age, swiche as han seyn and been expert in manye thinges, and been approved in conseil. For the book seith, that "in olde men is the sapience and in longe tyme the prudence." And Tullius seith: that "grete thinges ne been nat ay accompliced by strengthe, ne by deliveresse of body, but by good conseil, by auctoritee of persones, and by science; the whiche three thinges ne been nat feble by age, but certes they enforcen and encreesen day by day." And thanne shul ye kepe this for a general reule. First shul ye clepen to your conseil a fewe of your freendes that been especiale; for Salomon seith: "manye freendes have thou; but among a thousand chese thee oon to be thy conseilour." For al-be-it so that thou first ne telle thy conseil but to a fewe, thou mayst afterward telle it to mo folk, if it be nede. But loke alwey that thy conseilours have thilke three condiciouns that I have seyde bifore; that is to seyn, that they be trewe, wyse, and of old experience. And werke nat alwey in every nede by oon conseilour alone; for somtyme bihoveth it to been conseyled by manye.

For Salomon seith: "salvacioun of thinges is wher-as ther been manye conseilours."

§22. Now sith that I have told yow of which folk ye sholde been counselled, now wol I teche yow which conseil ye oghte to eschewe. First ye shul eschewe the conseil of foles; for Salomon seith: "taak no conseil of a fool, for he ne can noght conseil but after his owene lust and his affeccoun." The book seith: that "the propretee of a fool is this; he troweth lightly harm of every wight, and lightly troweth alle bountee in him-self." Thou shalt eek eschewe the conseil of alle flatereres, swiche as enforcen hem rather to preise your persone by flaterie than for to telle yow the sothfastnesse of thinges.

§23. 'Wherefore Tullius seith: "amonges alle the pestilences that been in freendshipe, the gretteste is flaterie." And therefore is it more nede that thou eschewe and drede flatereres than any other peple. The book seith: "thou shalt rather drede and flee fro the swete wordes of flateringe preises, than fro the egre wordes of thy freend that seith thee thy sothes." Salomon seith, that "the wordes of a flaterere is a snare to cacche with innocents." He seith also, that "he that speketh to his freend wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce, setteth a net biforn his feet to cacche him." And therefore seith Tullius: "encline nat thyne eres to flatereres, ne taketh no conseil of wordes of flaterie." And Caton seith: "avyse thee wel, and eschewe the wordes of swetnesse and of plesaunce." And eek thou shalt eschewe the conseil of thyne olde enemys that been reconsiled. The book seith: that "no wight retourneth sauily in-to the grace of his olde enemy." And Isepe seith: "ne trust nat to hem to whiche thou hast had som-tyme werre or enmittee, ne telle hem nat thy conseil." And Seneca telleth the cause why. "It may nat be," seith he, "that, where greet fyr hath longe tyme endured, that ther ne dwelleth som vapour of warmnesse." And therefore seith Salomon: "in thyn olde foo trust never." For sikerly, though thyn enemy be reconsiled and maketh thee chere of humiltee, and louteth to thee with his heed, ne trust him never. For certes, he maketh thilke feyned humiltee more for his profit than for any love of thy persone; by-cause that he demeth to have victorie over thy persone by swich feyned contenance, the which victorie he mighte nat have by stryf or werre. And Peter Alfonce seith: "make no felawshipe with thyne olde enemys; for if thou do hem bountee, they wol perverten it in-to wikkednesse." And eek thou most eschewe the conseil of hem that been thy servants, and beren thee greet reverence; for peraventure they seyn it more for drede than for love. And therefore seith a philosophre in this wyse: "ther is no wight parfitly trewe to him that he to sore dredeth." And Tullius seith: "ther nis no might so greet of any emperour, that longe may endure, but-if he have more love of the peple than drede." Thou shalt also eschewe the conseil of folk that been dronkelewe; for they ne can no conseil hyde. For Salomon seith: "ther is no privetee ther-as regneth dronkenesse." Ye shul also han in suspect the conseil of swich folk as conseil yow a thing prively, and conseil yow the contrarie openly. For Cassidorie seith: that "it is a maner sleight to hindre, whan he sheweth to doon a thing openly and werketh prively the contrarie." Thou shalt also have in suspect the conseil of wikked folk. For the book seith: "the conseil of wikked folk is alwey ful of fraude." And David seith: "blisful is that man that hath nat folwed the conseil of shrewes." Thou shalt also eschewe the conseil of yong folk; for hir conseil is nat rype.

§24. Now sir, sith I have shewed yow of which folk ye shul take your conseil, and of which folk ye shul folwe the conseil, now wol I teche yow how ye shal examine your conseil, after the doctrine of Tullius. In the examininge thanne of your conseilour, ye shul considere manye thinges. Alderfirst thou shalt considere, that in thilke thing that thou purposest, and upon what thing thou wolt have conseil, that verray trouthe be seyde and conserved; this is to seyn, telle trewely thy tale. For he that seith fals may nat wel be counselled, in that cas of which he lyeth. And after this, thou shalt considere the thinges that acorden to that thou purposest for to do by thy conseilours, if resoun accorde therto; and eek, if thy might may atteine ther-to; and if the more part and the bettre part of thy conseilours acorde ther-to, or no. Thanne shaltou considere what thing shal folwe of that conseil; as hate, pees, werre, grace, profit, or damage; and manye othere thinges. And in alle thise thinges thou shalt chese the beste, and weye alle othere thinges. Thanne shaltou considere of what rote is engendred the matere of thy conseil, and what fruit it may conceyve and engendre. Thou shalt eek considere alle thise causes, fro whennes they been sprongen. And whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde, and which partie is the bettre and more profitable, and hast approved it by manye wyse folk and olde; thanne shaltou considere, if thou mayst parfournen it and maken of it a good ende. For certes, resoun wol nat that any man sholde biginne a thing, but-if he mighte parfournen it as him oghte. Ne no wight sholde take up-on hym so hevye a charge that he mighte nat bere it. For the proverbe seith: "he that to muche embraceth, distreyneth litel." And Catoun seith: "assay to do swich thing as thou

hast power to doon, lest that the charge oppresse thee so sore, that thee bihoveth to weyve thing that thou hast bigonne." And if so be that thou be in doute, whether thou mayst parfourn a thing or noon, chese rather to suffre than biginne. And Piers Alphonse seith: "if thou hast might to doon a thing of which thou most repente thee, it is better 'nay' than 'ye';" this is to seyn, that thee is better holde thy tonge stille, than for to speke. Thanne may ye understonde by strengre resons, that if thou hast power to parfourn a werk of which thou shalt repente, thanne is it better that thou suffre than biginne. Wel seyn they, that defenden every wight to assaye any thing of which he is in doute, whether he may parfourn it or no. And after, whan ye han examined your conseil as I have seyde bifore, and knowen wel that ye may parfourn youre emprise, conferme it thanne sadly til it be at an ende.

§25. Now is it resoun and tyme that I shewe yow, whanne, and wherfore, that ye may chaunge your conseil with-outen your repreve. Soothly, a man may chaungen his purpos and his conseil if the cause cesseth, or whan a newe caas bitydeth. For the lawe seith: that "upon thinges that newly bityden bihoveth newe conseil." And Senek seith: "if thy conseil is comen to the eres of thyn enemy, chaunge thy conseil." Thou mayst also chaunge thy conseil if so be that thou finde that, by error or by other cause, harm or damage may bityde. Also, if thy conseil be dishonest, or elles cometh of dishoneste cause, chaunge thy conseil. For the lawes seyn: that "alle bihestes that been dishoneste been of no value." And eek, if it so be that it be impossible, or may nat goodly be parfourned or kept.

§26. And take this for a general reule, that every conseil that is affermed so strongly that it may nat be chaunged, for no condicioun that may bityde, I seye that thilke conseil is wikked.'

§27. This Melibeus, whanne he hadde herd the doctrine of his wyf dame Prudence, answerde in this wyse. 'Dame,' quod he, 'as yet in-to this tyme ye han wel and covenably taught me as in general, how I shal governe me in the chesinge and in the withholdinge of my conseilours. But now wolde I fayn that ye wolde condescende in especial, and telle me how lyketh yow, or what semeth yow, by our conseilours that we han chosen in our present nede.'

§28. 'My lord,' quod she, 'I biseke yow in al humblesse, that ye wol nat wilfully replye agayn my resouns, ne distempre your herte thogh I speke thing that yow displese. For god wot that, as in myn entente, I speke it for your beste, for your honour and for your profite eke. And soothly, I hope that your benignitee wol taken it in pacience. Trusteth me wel,' quod she, 'that your conseil as in this caas ne sholde nat, as to speke properly, be called a conseilour, but a mocion or a moevyng of folye; in which conseil ye han erred in many a sondry wyse.'

§29. First and forward, ye han erred in thassemlinge of your conseilours. For ye sholde first have cleped a fewe folk to your conseil, and after ye mighte han shewed it to mo folk, if it hadde been nede. But certes, ye han sodeynly cleped to your conseil a greet multitude of peple, ful chargeant and ful anyous for to here. Also ye han erred, for there-as ye sholden only have cleped to your conseil your trewe freendes olde and wyse, ye han y-cleped straunge folk, and yong folk, false flatereres, and enemys reconsiled, and folk that doon yow reverence withouten love. And eek also ye have erred, for ye han broght with yow to your conseil ire, covetise, and hastifnesse; the whiche three thinges been contrariouse to every conseil honeste and profitable; the whiche three thinges ye han nat anientissed or destroyed hem, neither in your-self ne in your conseilours, as yow oghte. Ye han erred also, for ye han shewed to your conseilours your talent, and your affeccion to make werre anon and for to do vengeance; they han espyed by your wordes to what thing ye been enclyned. And therfore han they rather conseilled yow to your talent than to your profit. Ye han erred also, for it semeth that yow suffyseth to han been conseilled by thise conseilours only, and with litel avys; wher-as, in so greet and so heigh a nede, it hadde been necessarie mo conseilours, and more deliberacioun to parfourn your emprise. Ye han erred also, for ye han nat examined your conseil in the forseide manere, ne in due manere as the caas requireth. Ye han erred also, for ye han maked no divisoun bitwixe your conseilours; this is to seyn, bitwixen your trewe freendes and your feyned conseilours; ne ye han nat knowe the wil of your trewe freendes olde and wyse; but ye han cast alle hir wordes in an hochepot, and enclyned your herte to the more part and to the gretter nombre; and ther been ye condescended. And sith ye wot wel that men shal alwey finde a gretter nombre of foles than of wyse men, and therfore the conseilours that been at congregaciouns and multitudes of folk, ther-as men take more reward to the nombre than to the sapience of persones, ye see wel that in swiche conseilouring foles han the maistrie.' Melibeus answerde agayn, and seyde: 'I graunte wel that I have erred; but ther-as thou hast told me heer-bifore, that he nis nat to blame that chaungeth hise conseilours in certein caas, and for certein iuste causes, I am al redy to chaunge my conseilours, right as thou wolt devyse. The proverbe seith:

that "for to do sinne is mannish, but certes for to persevere longe in sinne is werk of the devel."

§30. To this sentence answerde anon dame Prudence, and seyde: 'Examineth,' quod she, 'your conseil, and lat us see the whiche of hem han spoken most resonably, and taught yow best conseil. And for-as-muche as that the examinacioun is necessarie, lat us biginne at the surgiens and at the phisiciens, that first speken in this matere. I sey yow, that the surgiens and phisiciens han seyde yow in your conseil discreetly, as hem oughte; and in hir speche seyden ful wysly, that to the office of hem aperteneth to doon to every wight honour and profit, and no wight for to anoye; and, after hir craft, to doon greet diligence un-to the cure of hem whiche that they han in hir governaunce. And sir, right as they han answered wysly and discreetly, right so rede I that they been heighly and sovereynly guerdoned for hir noble speche; and eek for they sholde do the more ententif bisnesse in the curacioun of your doghter dere. For al-be-it so that they been your freendes, therfore shal ye nat suffren that they serve yow for noght; but ye oghte the rather guerdone hem and shewe hem your largesse. And as touchinge the proposicioun which that the phisiciens entreteden in this caas, this is to seyn, that, in maladyes, that oon contrarie is warissshed by another contrarie, I wolde fayn knowe how ye understonde thilke text, and what is your sentence.' 'Certes,' quod Melibeus, 'I understonde it in this wyse: that, right as they han doon me a contrarie, right so sholde I doon hem another. For right as they han venged hem on me and doon me wrong, right so shal I venge me upon hem and doon hem wrong; and thanne have I cured oon contrarie by another.'

§31. 'Lo, lo!' quod dame Prudence, 'how lightly is every man enclyned to his owene desyr and to his owene plesaunce! Certes,' quod she, 'the wordes of the phisiciens ne sholde nat han been understonden in this wyse. For certes, wikkednesse is nat contrarie to wikkednesse, ne vengeaunce to vengeaunce, ne wrong to wrong; but they been semblable. And therfore, o vengeaunce is nat warissshed by another vengeaunce, ne o wrong by another wrong; but everich of hem encreesceth and aggreggeth other. But certes, the wordes of the phisiciens sholde been understonden in this wyse: for good and wikkednesse been two contraries, and pees and werre, vengeaunce and suffraunce, discord and accord, and manye othere thinges. But certes, wikkednesse shal be warissshed by goodnesse, discord by accord, werre by pees, and so forth of othere thinges. And heer-to accordeth Saint Paul the apostle in manye places. He seith: "ne yeldeth nat harm for harm, ne wikked speche for wikked speche; but do wel to him that dooth thee harm, and blesse him that seith to thee harm." And in manye othere places he amonesteth pees and accord. But now wol I speke to yow of the conseil which that was yeven to yow by the men of lawe and the wyse folk, that seyden alle by oon accord as ye han herd bifore; that, over alle thynges, ye sholde doon your diligence to kepen your persone and to warnestore your hous. And seyden also, that in this caas ye oghten for to werken ful avysely and with greet deliberacioun. And sir, as to the firste point, that toucheth to the keping of your persone; ye shul understonde that he that hath werre shal evermore mekely and devoutly preyen biforn alle thinges, that Iesus Crist of his grete mercy wol han him in his proteccioun, and been his sovereyn helping at his nede. For certes, in this world ther is no wight that may be conseilled ne kept suffisantly withouten the keping of our lord Iesu Crist. To this sentence accordeth the prophete David, that seith: "if god ne kepe the citee, in ydel waketh he that it kepeth." Now sir, thanne shul ye committe the keping of your persone to your trewe freendes that been approved and y-knowe; and of hem shul ye axen help your persone for to kepe. For Catoun seith: "if thou hast nede of help, axe it of thy freendes; for ther nis noon so good a phisicien as thy trewe freend." And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow fro alle straunge folk, and fro lyeres, and have alwey in suspect hir companye. For Piers Alfonse seith: "ne tak no companye by the weye of a straunge man, but-if so be that thou have knowe him of a lenger tyme. And if so be that he falle in-to thy companye paraventure withouten thyn assent, enquire thanne, as subtilly as thou mayst, of his conversacioun and of his lyf bifore, and feyne thy wey; seye that thou goost thider as thou wolt nat go; and if he bereth a spere, hold thee on the right syde, and if he bere a swerd, hold thee on the lift syde." And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow wysely from alle swich manere peple as I have seyde bifore, and hem and hir conseil eschewe. And after this, thanne shul ye kepe yow in swich manere, that for any presumpcioun of your strengthe, that ye ne dispyse nat ne acounte nat the might of your adversarie so litel, that ye lete the keping of your persone for your presumpcioun; for every wys man dredeth his enemy. And Salomon seith: "weleful is he that of alle hath drede; for certes, he that thurgh the hardinesse of his herte and thurgh the hardinesse of him-self hath to greet presumpcioun, him shal yvel bityde." Thanne shul ye evermore countrewayte embusshements and alle espiaille. For Senek seith: that "the wyse man that dredeth harmes escheweth harmes; ne he ne falleth in-to perils, that

perils escheweth." And al-be-it so that it seme that thou art in siker place, yet shaltow alwey do thy diligence in kepinge of thy persone; this is to seyn, ne be nat negligent to kepe thy persone, nat only fro thy gretteste enemys but fro thy leeste enemy. Senek seith: "a man that is wel avysed, he dredeth his leste enemy." Ovide seith: that "the litel wesele wol slee the grete bole and the wilde hert." And the book seith: "a litel thorn may prikke a greet king ful sore; and an hound wol holde the wilde boor." But natheles, I sey nat thou shall be so coward that thou doute ther wher-as is no drede. The book seith: that "somme folk han greet lust to deceyve, but yet they dreden hem to be deceyved." Yet shaltow drede to been empoisoned, and kepe yow from the companye of scorneres. For the book seith: "with scorneres make no companye, but flee hir wordes as venim."

§32. Now as to the seconde point, wher-as your wyse conseilours conseyled yow to warnestore your hous with gret diligence, I wolde fayn knowe, how that ye understonde thilke wordes, and what is your sentence.'

§33. Melibeus answerde and seyde, 'Certes I understande it in this wise; that I shal warnestore myn hous with toures, swiche as han castelles and othere manere edifices, and armure and artilleries, by whiche thinges I may my persone and myn hous so kepen and defenden, that myne enemys shul been in drede myn hous for to approche.'

§34. To this sentence answerde anon Prudence; 'warnestoring,' quod she, 'of heighe toures and of grete edifices apperteneth som-tyme to pryde; and eek men make heighe toures and grete edifices with grete costages and with greet travaille; and whan that they been accompliced, yet be they nat worth a stree, but-if they be defended by trewe freendes that been olde and wyse. And understand wel, that the gretteste and strongeste garnison that a riche man may have, as wel to kepen his persone as hise goodes, is that he be biloved amonges his subgets and with hise neighebores. For thus seith Tullius: that "ther is a maner garnison that no man may venquise ne disconfite, and that is, a lord to be biloved of hise citezeins and of his peple."

§35. Now sir, as to the thridde point; wher-as your olde and wise conseilours seyden, that yow ne oghte nat sodeynly ne hastily proceden in this nede, but that yow oghte purveyen and apparailen yow in this caas with greet diligence and greet deliberacioun; trewely, I trowe that they seyden right wysly and right sooth. For Tullius seith, "in every nede, er thou biginne it, apparaille thee with greet diligence." Thanne seye I, that in vengeance-taking, in werre, in bataille, and in warnestoring, er thou biginne, I rede that thou apparaille thee ther-to, and do it with greet deliberacioun. For Tullius seith: that "long apparailing biforn the bataille maketh short victorie." And Cassidorus seith: "the garnison is stronger whan it is longe tyme avysed."

§36. But now lat us speken of the conseil that was accorded by your neighebores, swiche as doon yow reverence withouten love, your olde enemys reconciled, your flatereres, that conseyled yow certeyne thinges prively, and openly conseyleden yow the contrarie; the yonge folk also, that conseyleden yow to venge yow and make werre anon. And certes, sir, as I have seyd biforn, ye han greetly erred to han cleped swich maner folk to your conseil; which conseilours been y-nogh reprevd by the resouns afore-seyd. But natheles, lat us now descende to the special. Ye shuln first procede after the doctrine of Tullius. Certes, the trouthe of this matere or of this conseil nedeth nat diligently enquire; for it is wel wist whiche they been that han doon to yow this trespas and vileinye, and how manye trespassours, and in what manere they han to yow doon al this wrong and al this vileinye. And after this, thanne shul ye examine the seconde condicioun, which that the same Tullius addeth in this matere. For Tullius put a thing, which that he clepeth "consenting," this is to seyn; who been they and how manye, and whiche been they, that consenteden to thy conseil, in thy wilfulnesse to doon hastif vengeance. And lat us considere also who been they, and how manye been they, and whiche been they, that consenteden to your adversaries. And certes, as to the firste poynt, it is wel knowen whiche folk been they that consenteden to your hastif wilfulnesse; for trewely, alle tho that conseyleden yow to maken sodeyn werre ne been nat your freendes. Lat us now considere whiche been they, that ye holde so greetly your freendes as to your persone. For al-be-it so that ye be mighty and riche, certes ye ne been nat but allone. For certes, ye ne han no child but a doghter; ne ye ne han bretheren ne cosins germayns, ne noon other neigh kinrede, wherfore that your enemys, for drede, sholde stinte to plede with yow or to destroye your persone. Ye knowen also, that your riches moten been dispended in diverse parties; and whan that every wight hath his part, they ne wollen taken but litel reward to venge thy deeth. But thyne enemys been three, and they han manie children, bretheren, cosins, and other ny kinrede; and, though so were that thou hadde slayn of hem two or three, yet dwellen ther y-nowe to wrenken

hir deeth and to slee thy persone. And though so be that your kinrede be more siker and stedefast than the kin of your adversarie, yet nathelees your kinrede nis but a fer kinrede; they been but litel sib to yow, and the kin of your enemys been ny sib to hem. And certes, as in that, hir condicioun is bet than yowes. Thanne lat us considere also if the conseilling of hem that conseilleden yow to taken sodeyn vengeance, whether it accorde to resoun? And certes, ye knowe wel "nay." For as by right and resoun, ther may no man taken vengeance on no wight, but the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccoun of it, whan it is graunted him to take thilke vengeance, hastily or attemprely, as the lawe requireth. And yet more-over, of thilke word that Tullius clepeth "consentinge," thou shalt considere if thy might and thy power may consenten and suffyse to thy wilfulnesse and to thy conseilours. And certes, thou mayst wel seyn that "nay." For sikerly, as for to speke proprely, we may do no-thing but only swich thing as we may doon rightfully. And certes, rightfully ne mowe ye take no vengeance as of your propre auctoritee. Thanne mowe ye seen, that your power ne consenteth nat ne accordeth nat with your wilfulnesse. Lat us now examine the thridde point that Tullius clepeth "consequent." Thou shalt understonde that the vengeance that thou purposest for to take is the consequent. And ther-of folweth another vengeance, peril, and werre; and othere damages with-oute nombre, of whiche we be nat war as at this tyme. And as touchinge the fourthe point, that Tullius clepeth "engendringe," thou shalt considere, that this wrong which that is doon to thee is engendred of the hate of thyne enemys; and of the vengeance-takinge upon that wolde engendre another vengeance, and muchel sorwe and wastinge of riches, as I seyde.

§37. Now sir, as to the point that Tullius clepeth "causes," which that is the laste point, thou shall understonde that the wrong that thou hast receyved hath certeine causes, whiche that clerkes clepen *Oriens* and *Efficiens*, and *Causa longinqua* and *Causa propinqua*; this is to seyn, the fer cause and the ny cause. The fer cause is almighty god, that is cause of alle thinges. The neer cause is thy three enemys. The cause accidental was hate. The cause material been the fyve woundes of thy doghter. The cause formal is the manere of hir werkinge, that broghten laddres and cloumben in at thy windowes. The cause final was for to slee thy doghter; it letted nat in as muche as in hem was. But for to speken of the fer cause, as to what ende they shul come, or what shal finally bityde of hem in this caas, ne can I nat deme but by coniectinge and by supposinge. For we shul suppose that they shul come to a wikked ende, by-cause that the Book of Decrees seith: "selden or with greet payne been causes y-broght to good ende whanne they been baddely bigonne."

§38. Now sir, if men wolde axe me, why that god suffred men to do yow this vileinye, certes, I can nat wel answere as for no sothfastnesse. For thapostle seith, that "the sciences and the Iuggementz of our lord god almighty been ful depe; ther may no man comprehende ne serchen hem suffisantly." Nathelees, by certeyne presumpcions and coniectinges, I holde and bileve that god, which that is ful of Iustice and of rightwisnesse, hath suffred this bityde by Iuste cause resonable.

§39. Thy name is Melibee, this is to seyn, "a man that drinketh hony." Thou hast y-dronke so muchel hony of swete temporel riches and delices and honours of this world, that thou art dronken; and hast forgotten Iesu Crist thy creatour; thou ne hast nat doon to him swich honour and reverence as thee oughte. Ne thou ne hast nat wel y-taken kepe to the wordes of Ovide, that seith: "under the hony of the godes of the body is hid the venim that sleeth the soule." And Salomon seith, "if thou hast founden hony, ete of it that suffyseth; for if thou ete of it out of mesure, thou shalt spewe," and be nedey and povre. And peraventure Crist hath thee in despit, and hath turned away fro thee his face and hise eres of misericorde; and also he hath suffred that thou hast been punisshed in the manere that thou hast y-trespased. Thou hast doon sinne agayn our lord Crist; for certes, the three enemys of mankinde, that is to seyn, the flessch, the feend, and the world, thou hast suffred hem entre in-to thyn herte wilfully by the windowes of thy body, and hast nat defended thy-self suffisantly agayns hir assautes and hir temptaciouns, so that they han wounded thy soule in fyve places; this is to seyn, the deedly sinnes that been entred in-to thyn herte by thy fyve wittes. And in the same manere our lord Crist hath wold and suffred, that thy three enemys been entred in-to thyn hous by the windowes, and han y-wounded thy doghter in the fore-seyde manere.'

§40. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I see wel that ye enforce yow muchel by wordes to overcome me in swich manere, that I shal nat venge me of myne enemys; shewing me the perils and the yveles that mighten falle of this vengeance. But who-so wolde considere in alle vengeance the perils and yveles that mighte sewe of vengeance-takinge, a man wolde never take vengeance, and that were harm; for by the vengeance-takinge been the wikked men dissevered fro the gode men. And they that han

wil to do wikkednesse restreyn hir wikked purpos, whan they seen the punissinge and chastysinge of the trespassours.' [And to this answerde dame Prudence: 'Certes,' seyde she, 'I graunte wel that of vengeaunce cometh muchel yvel and muchel good; but vengeaunce-taking aperteneth nat unto everichoon, but only unto Iuges and unto hem that han Iurisdiccioun upon the trespassours.] And yet seye I more, that right as a singuler persone sinneth in takinge vengeaunce of another man, right so sinneth the Iuge if he do no vengeaunce of hem that it han deserved. For Senek seith thus: "that maister," he seith, "is good that proveth shrewes." And as Cassidore seith: "A man dredeth to do outrages, whan he woot and knoweth that it displeth to the Iuges and sovereyns." And another seith: "the Iuge that dredeth to do right, maketh men shrewes." And Seint Paule the apostle seith in his epistle, whan he wryteth un-to the Romayns: that "the Iuges beren nat the spere with-outen cause;" but they beren it to punisse the shrewes and misdoeres, and for to defende the gode men. If ye wol thanne take vengeaunce of your enemys, ye shul retourne or have your recours to the Iuge that hath the Iurisdiccion up-on hem; and he shal punisse hem as the lawe axeth and requyreth.'

§41. 'A!' quod Melibee, 'this vengeaunce lyketh me no-thing. I bithenke me now and take hede, how fortune hath norissed me fro my childhede, and hath holpen me to passe many a strong pas. Now wol I assayen hir, trowinge, with goddes help, that she shal helpe me my shame for to venge.'

§42. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'if ye wol werke by my conseil, ye shul nat assaye fortune by no wey; ne ye shul nat lene or bowe unto hir, after the word of Senek: for "thinges that been folily doon, and that been in hope of fortune, shullen never come to good ende." And as the same Senek seith: "the more cleer and the more shyning that fortune is, the more brotil and the sonner broken she is." Trusteth nat in hir, for she nis nat stidefast ne stable; for whan thou trowest to be most seur or siker of hir help, she wol faille thee and deceyve thee. And wher-as ye seyn that fortune hath norissed yow fro your childhede, I seye, that in so muchel shul ye the lasse truste in hir and in hir wit. For Senek seith: "what man that is norissed by fortune, she maketh him a greet fool." Now thanne, sin ye desyre and axe vengeaunce, and the vengeaunce that is doon after the lawe and bfore the Iuge ne lyketh yow nat, and the vengeaunce that is doon in hope of fortune is perilous and uncertein, thanne have ye noon other remedie but for to have your recours unto the sovereyn Iuge that vengeth alle vileinyes and wronges; and he shal venge yow after that him-self witnesseth, wher-as he seith: "leveth the vengeaunce to me, and I shal do it."

§43. Melibee answerde, 'if I ne venge me nat of the vileinye that men han doon to me, I sompne or warne hem that han doon to me that vileinye and alle othere, to do me another vileinye. For it is writen: "if thou take no vengeaunce of an old vileinye, thou sompnest thyne adversaries to do thee a newe vileinye." And also, for my suffrance, men wolden do to me so muchel vileinye, that I mighte neither here it ne sustene; and so sholde I been put and holden over lowe. For men seyn: "in muchel suffringe shul manye thinges falle un-to thee whiche thou shalt nat mowe suffre."

§44. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'I graunte yow that over muchel suffraunce nis nat good; but yet ne folweth it nat ther-of, that every persone to whom men doon vileinye take of it vengeaunce; for that aperteneth and longeth al only to the Iuges, for they shul venge the vileinyes and iniuries. And therefore tho two auctoritees that ye han seyd above, been only understonden in the Iuges; for whan they suffren over muchel the wronges and the vileinyes to be doon withouten punisshinge, they sompne nat a man al only for to do newe wronges, but they comanden it. Also a wys man seith: that "the Iuge that correcteth nat the sinnere comandeth and biddeth him do sinne." And the Iuges and sovereyns mighten in hir land so muchel suffre of the shrewes and misdoeres, that they sholden by swich suffrance, by proces of tyme, wexen of swich power and might, that they sholden putte out the Iuges and the sovereyns from hir places, and atte laste maken hem lesen hir lordshipes.

§45. But lat us now putte, that ye have leve to venge yow. I seye ye been nat of might and power as now to venge yow. For if ye wole maken comparisoun un-to the might of your adversaries, ye shul finde in manye thinges, that I have shewed yow er this, that hir condicioun is bettre than youres. And therefore seye I, that it is good as now that ye suffre and be pacient.

§46. Forther-more, ye knowen wel that, after the comune sawe, "it is a woodnesse a man to stryve with a strengre or a more mighty man than he is him-self; and for to stryve with a man of evene strengthe, that is to seyn, with as strong a man as he, it is peril; and for to stryve with a weyker man, it is folie." And therefore sholde a man flee stryvinge as muchel as he mighte. For Salomon seith: "it is a greet worship to a man to kepen him fro noyse and stryf." And if it so bifalle or happe that a man of gretter might and strengthe than thou art do thee grevaunce, studie and bisie thee rather to stille

the same grevaunce, than for to venge thee. For Senek seith: that "he putteth him in greet peril that stryvet with a gretter man than he is him-self." And Catoun seith: "if a man of hyer estaat or degree, or more mighty than thou, do thee any or grevaunce, suffre him; for he that ones hath greved thee may another tyme releve thee and helpe." Yet sette I caas, ye have bothe might and licence for to venge yow. I seye, that ther be ful manye thinges that shul restreyn yow of vengeance-takinge, and make yow for to encline to suffre, and for to han pacience in the thinges that han been doon to yow. First and foreward, if ye wole considere the defautes that been in your owene persone, for whiche defautes god hath suffred yow have this tribulacioun, as I have seyde yow heer-biforn. For the poete seith, that "we oghte paciently taken the tribulacions that comen to us, whan we thinken and consideren that we han deserved to have hem." And Seint Gregorie seith: that "whan a man considereth wel the nombre of hise defautes and of his sinnes, the peynes and the tribulaciouns that he suffreth semen the lesse un-to hym; and in-as-muche as him thinketh hise sinnes more hevy and grevous, in-so-muche semeth his payne the lighter and the esier un-to him." Also ye owen to encline and bowe your herte to take the pacience of our lord Iesu Crist, as seith seint Peter in hise epistles: "Iesu Crist," he seith, "hath suffred for us, and yeven ensample to every man to folwe and sewe him; for he dide never sinne, ne never cam ther a vileinous word out of his mouth: whan men cursed him, he cursed hem noght; and whan men betten him, he manaced hem noght." Also the grete pacience, which the seintes that been in paradys han had in tribulaciouns that they han y-suffred, with-outen hir desert or gilt, oghte muchel stiren yow to pacience. Forthermore, ye sholde enforce yow to have pacience, consideringe that the tribulaciouns of this world but litel whyle endure, and sone passed been and goon. And the Ioye that a man seketh to have by pacience in tribulaciouns is perdurable, after that the apostle seith in his epistle: "the Ioye of god," he seith, "is perdurable," that is to seyn, everlastinge. Also troweth and bileveth stedefastly, that he nis nat wel y-norissed ne wel y-taught, that can nat have pacience or wol nat receyve pacience. For Salomon seith: that "the doctrine and the wit of a man is knowen by pacience." And in another place he seith: that "he that is pacient governeth him by greet prudence." And the same Salomon seith: "the angry and wrathful man maketh noyses, and the pacient man atempreth hem and stilleth." He seith also: "it is more worth to be pacient than for to be right strong; and he that may have the lordshipe of his owene herte is more to preyse, than he that by his force or strengthe taketh grete citees." And therfore seith seint Iame in his epistle: that "pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun."

§47. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, dame Prudence, that pacience is a greet vertu of perfeccioun; but every man may nat have the perfeccioun that ye seken; ne I nam nat of the nombre of right parfite men, for myn herte may never been in pees un-to the tyme it be venged. And al-be-it so that it was greet peril to myne enemys, to do me a vileinye in takinge vengeance up-on me, yet token they noon hede of the peril, but fulfilleden hir wikked wil and hir corage. And therfore, me thinketh men oghten nat repreve me, though I putte me in a litel peril for to venge me, and though I do a greet excesse, that is to seyn, that I venge oon outrage by another.'

§48. 'Al!' quod dame Prudence, 'ye seyn your wil and as yow lyketh; but in no caas of the world a man sholde nat doon outrage ne excesse for to vengen him. For Cassidore seith: that "as yvel doth he that vengeth him by outrage, as he that doth the outrage." And therfore ye shul venge yow after the ordre of right, that is to seyn by the lawe, and noght by excesse ne by outrage. And also, if ye wol venge yow of the outrage of your adversaries in other maner than right comandeth, ye sinnen; and therfore seith Senek: that "a man shal never vengen shrewednesse by shrewednesse." And if ye seye, that right axeth a man to defenden violence by violence, and fighting by fighting, certes ye seye sooth, whan the defense is doon anon with-outen interalle or with-outen taryng or delay, for to defenden him and nat for to vengen him. And it bihoveth that a man putte swich attemperance in his defence, that men have no cause ne matere to repreven him that defendeth him of excesse and outrage; for elles were it agayn resoun. Pardee, ye knowen wel, that ye maken no defence as now for to defende yow, but for to venge yow; and so seweth it that ye han no wil to do your dede attemprely. And therfore, me thinketh that pacience is good. For Salomon seith: that "he that is nat pacient shal have greet harm."

§49. 'Certes,' quod Melibee, 'I graunte yow, that whan a man is inpacient and wroth, of that that toucheth him noght and that aperteneth nat un-to him, though it harme him, it is no wonder. For the lawe seith: that "he is coupable that entremetteth or medleth with swich thyng as aperteneth nat un-to him." And Salomon seith: that "he that entremetteth him of the noyse or stryf of another man, is lyk to him that taketh an hound by the eres." For right as he that taketh a straunge hound by the eres is outhewhyle biten with the hound, right in the same wyse is it resoun that he have harm, that

by his inpacience medleth him of the noyse of another man, wher-as it aperteneth nat un-to him. But ye knowen wel that this dede, that is to seyn, my grief and my dise, toucheth me right ny. And therfore, though I be wroth and inpacient, it is no mervelle. And savinge your grace, I can nat seen that it mighte greetly harme me though I toke vengeance; for I am richer and more mighty than myne enemys been. And wel knowen ye, that by moneye and by havinge grete possessions been all the thinges of this world governed. And Salomon seith: that "alle thinges obeyen to moneye."

§50. Whan Prudence hadde herd hir housbonde avanten him of his richesse and of his moneye, dispreisinge the power of hise adversaries, she spak, and seyde in this wyse: 'certes, dere sir, I graunte yow that ye been rich and mighty, and that the riches been goode to hem that han wel y-geten hem and wel conne usen hem. For right as the body of a man may nat liven with-oute the soule, namore may it live with-outen temporel goodes. And by riches may a man gete him grete freendes. And therfore seith Pamphilles: "if a net-herdes doghter," seith he, "be riche, she may chesen of a thousand men which she wol take to hir housbonde; for, of a thousand men, oon wol nat forsaken hir ne refusen hir." And this Pamphilles seith also: "if thou be right happy, that is to seyn, if thou be right riche, thou shalt find a greet nombre of felawes and freendes. And if thy fortune change that thou wexe povre, farewel freendshipe and felaweshipe; for thou shalt be allone with-outen any companye, but-if it be the companye of povre folk." And yet seith this Pamphilles moreover: that "they that been thralle and bonde of linage shullen been maad worthy and noble by the riches." And right so as by riches ther comen manye goodes, right so by poverté come ther manye harmes and yveles. For greet poverté constreyneth a man to do manye yveles. And therfore clepeth Cassidore poverté "the moder of ruine," that is to seyn, the moder of overthrowinge or fallinge down. And therfore seith Piers Alfonc: "oon of the gretteste adversitees of this world is whan a free man, by kinde or by burthe, is constreyned by poverté to eten the almesse of his enemy." And the same seith Innocent in oon of hise bokes; he seith: that "sorweful and mishappy is the condicioun of a povre begger; for if he axe nat his mete, he dyeth for hunger; and if he axe, he dyeth for shame; and algates necessitee constreyneth him to axe." And therfore seith Salomon: that "bet it is to dye than for to have swich poverté." And as the same Salomon seith: "bette it is to dye of bitter deeth than for to liven in swich wyse." By thise resons that I have seid un-to yow, and by manye othere resons that I coude seye, I graunte yow that riches been goode to hem that gotten hem wel, and to hem that wel usen tho riches. And therfore wol I shewe yow how ye shul have yow, and how ye shul here yow in gaderinge of riches, and in what manere ye shul usen hem.

§51. First, ye shul gotten hem with-outen greet desyr, by good leyser sokingly, and nat over hastily. For a man that is to desyringe to gete riches abaddoneth him first to thefte and to alle other yveles. And therfore seith Salomon: "he that hasteth him to bisily to wexe riche shal be noon innocent." He seith also: that "the riches that hastily cometh to a man, sone and lightly gooth and passeth fro a man; but that riches that cometh litel and litel wexeth alwey and multiplyeth." And sir, ye shul gotten riches by your wit and by your travaille un-to your profit; and that with-outen wrong or harm-doinge to any other persone. For the lawe seith: that "ther maketh no man himselven riche, if he do harm to another wight;" this is to seyn, that nature defendeth and forbedeth by right, that no man make him-self riche un-to the harm of another persone. And Tullius seith: that "no sorwe ne no drede of deeth, ne no-thing that may falle un-to a man is so muchel agayns nature, as a man to encressen his owene profit to the harm of another man. And though the grete men and the mighty men gotten riches more lightly than thou, yet shaltou nat been ydel ne slow to do thy profit; for thou shalt in alle wyse flee ydelnesse." For Salomon seith: that "ydelnesse techeth a man to do manye yveles." And the same Salomon seith: that "he that travailleth and bisieth him to tilien his land, shal eten breed; but he that is ydel and casteth him to no bisnesse ne occupacioun, shal falle in-to poverté, and dye for hunger." And he that is ydel and slow can never finde covenable tyme for to doon his profit. For ther is a versifiour seith: that "the ydel man excuseth hym in winter, by cause of the grete cold; and in somer, by enchesoun of the hete." For thise causes seith Caton: "waketh and enclyneth nat yow over muchel for to slepe; for over muchel reste norisseth and causeth manye vices." And therfore seith seint Ierome: "doth somme gode dedes, that the devel which is our enemy ne finde yow nat unoccupied." For the devel ne taketh nat lightly un-to his werkinge swiche as he findeth occupied in gode werkes.

§52. Thanne thus, in getinge riches, ye mosten flee ydelnesse. And afterward, ye shul use the riches, whiche ye have gotten by your wit and by your travaille, in swich a manere, that men holde nat yow to scars, ne to sparinge, ne to fool-large, that is to seyn, over-large a spender. For right as men

blamen an avaricious man by-cause of his scarsetee and chincherye, in the same wyse is he to blame that spendeth over largely. And therfore seith Caton: "use," he seith, "thy riches that thou hast gotten in swich a manere, that men have no matere ne cause to calle thee neither wrecche ne chinche; for it is a greet shame to a man to have a povere herte and a riche purs." He seith also: "the goodes that thou hast y-geten, use hem by mesure," that is to seyn, spende hem mesurably; for they that folily wasten and despenden the goodes that they han, whan they han namore propre of hir owene, they shapen hem to take the goodes of another man. I seye thanne, that ye shul fleen avarice; usinge your riches in swich manere, that men seye nat that your riches been y-buried, but that ye have hem in your might and in your weeldinge. For a wys man repreveth the avaricious man, and seith thus, in two vers: "wherto and why burieth a man hise goodes by his grete avarice, and knoweth wel that nedes moste he dye; for deeth is the ende of every man as in this present lyf." And for what cause or enchesoun Ioyneth he him or knitteth he him so faste un-to hise goodes, that alle his wittes mowen nat disseveren him or departen him from hise goodes; and knoweth wel, or oghte knowe, that whan he is deed, he shal no-thing bere with him out of this world. And ther-fore seith seint Augustin: that "the avaricious man is likned un-to helle; that the more it swelweth, the more desyr it hath to swelwe and devoure." And as wel as ye wolde eschewe to be called an avaricious man or chinche, as wel sholde ye kepe yow and governe yow in swich a wyse that men calle yow nat fool-large. Therfore seith Tullius: "the goodes," he seith, "of thyn hous ne sholde nat been hid, ne kept so cloos but that they mighte been opened by pitee and debonairetee;" that is to seyn, to yeven part to hem that han greet nede; "ne thy goodes shullen nat been so opene, to been every mannes goodes." Afterward, in getinge of your riches and in usinge hem, ye shul alwey have three thinges in your herte; that is to seyn, our lord god, conscience, and good name. First, ye shul have god in your herte; and for no riches ye shullen do nothing, which may in any manere displese god, that is your creatour and maker. For after the word of Salomon: "it is bettre to have a litel good with the love of god, than to have muchel good and tresour, and lese the love of his lord god." And the prophete seith: that "bette it is to been a good man and have litel good and tresour, than to been holden a shrewe and have grete riches." And yet seye I ferthermore, that ye sholde alwey doon your bisnesse to gete yow riches, so that ye gete hem with good conscience. And thapostle seith: that "ther nis thing in this world, of which we sholden have so greet loye as whan our conscience bereth us good witesse." And the wyse man seith: "the substance of a man is ful good, whan sinne is nat in mannes conscience." Afterward, in getinge of your riches, and in usinge of hem, yow moste have greet bisnesse and greet diligence, that your goode name be alwey kept and conserved. For Salomon seith: that "bette it is and more it availleth a man to have a good name, than for to have grete riches." And therfore he seith in another place: "do greet diligence," seith Salomon, "in keping of thy freend and of thy gode name; for it shal lenger abide with thee than any tresour, be it never so precious." And certes he sholde nat be called a gentil man, that after god and good conscience, alle thinges left, ne dooth his diligence and bisnesse to kepen his good name. And Cassidore seith: that "it is signe of a gentil herte, whan a man loveth and desyreth to han a good name." And therfore seith seint Augustin: that "ther been two thinges that arn necessarie and nedefulle, and that is good conscience and good loos; that is to seyn, good conscience to thyn owene persone inward, and good loos for thy neighebores outward." And he that trusteth him so muchel in his gode conscience, that he displeseth and setteth at noght his gode name or loos, and rekketh noght though he kepe nat his gode name, nis but a cruel cherl.

§53. Sire, now have I shewed yow how ye shul do in getinge riches, and how ye shullen usen hem; and I se wel, that for the trust that ye han in youre riches, ye wole moeve werre and bataille. I conseilte yow, that ye biginne no werre in trust of your riches; for they ne suffysen noght werres to mayntene. And therfore seith a philosopre: "that man that desyreth and wole algates han werre, shal never have suffisaunce; for the richer that he is, the gretter despenses moste he make, if he wole have worship and victorie." And Salomon seith: that "the gretter riches that a man hath, the mo despendours he hath." And dere sire, al-be-it so that for your riches ye mowe have muchel folk, yet bihoveth it nat, ne it is nat good, to biginne werre, where-as ye mowe in other manere have pees, un-to your worship and profit. For the victories of batailles that been in this world, lyen nat in greet nombre or multitude of the peple ne in the vertu of man; but it lyth in the wil and in the hand of our lord god almighty. And therfore Judas Machabeus, which was goddes knight, whan he sholde fighte agayn his adversarie that hadde a greet nombre, and a gretter multitude of folk and strengier than was this peple of Machabee, yet he reconforted his litel companye, and seyde right in this wyse: "als lightly," quod

he, "may our lord god almighty yeve victorie to a fewe folk as to many folk; for the victorie of bataile cometh nat by the grete nombre of peple, but it cometh from our lord god of hevene." And dere sir, for as muchel as there is no man certein, if he be worthy that god yeve him victorie, [namore than he is certein whether he be worthy of the love of god] or naught, after that Salomon seith, therfore every man sholde greetly drede werres to biginne. And by-cause that in batailles fallen manye perils, and happeth outhere-while, that as sone is the grete man sleyn as the litel man; and, as it is written in the seconde book of Kinges, "the dedes of batailles been aventureuse and nothing certeyne;" for as lightly is oon hurt with a spere as another. And for ther is gret peril in werre, therfore sholde a man flee and eschewe werre, in as muchel as a man may goodly. For Salomon seith: "he that loveth peril shal falle in peril."

§54. After that Dame Prudence hadde spoken in this manere, Melibee answerde and seyde, 'I see wel, dame Prudence, that by your faire wordes and by your resons that ye han shewed me, that the werre lyketh yow no-thing; but I have nat yet herd your conseil, how I shal do in this nede.'

§55. 'Certes,' quod she, 'I conseilte yow that ye accorde with youre adversaries, and that ye haue pees with hem. For seint Iame seith in hise epistles: that "by concord and pees the smale richesses wexen grete, and by debaat and discord the grete richesses fallen down." And ye knowen wel that oon of the gretteste and most sovereyn thing, that is in this world, is unitee and pees. And therfore seyde oure lord Iesu Crist to hise apostles in this wyse: "wel happy and blessed been they that loven and purchacen pees; for they been called children of god." 'A!' quod Melibee, 'now se I wel that ye loven nat myn honour ne my worship. Ye knowen wel that myne adversaries han bigonnen this debaat and brige by hir outrage; and ye see wel that they ne requeren ne preyen me nat of pees, ne they asken nat to be reconciled. Wol ye thanne that I go and meke me and obeie me to hem, and crye hem mercy? For sothe, that were nat my worship. For right as men seyn, that "over-greet homlinesse engendreth dispreysinge," so fareth it by to greet humylitee or mekenesse.'

§56. Thanne bigan dame Prudence to maken semblant of wratthe, and seyde, 'certes, sir, sauf your grace, I love your honour and your profit as I do myn owene, and ever have doon; ne ye ne noon other syen never the contrarie. And yit, if I hadde seyde that ye sholde han purchaced the pees and the reconciliacioun, I ne hadde nat muchel mistaken me, ne seyde amis. For the wyse man seith: "the dissensioun biginneth by another man, and the reconciling bi-ginneth by thy-self." And the prophete seith: "flee shrewednesse and do goodnesse; seke pees and folwe it, as muchel as in thee is." Yet seye I nat that ye shul rather pursue to your adversaries for pees than they shuln to yow; for I knowe wel that ye been so hard-herted, that ye wol do no-thing for me. And Salomon seith: "he that hath over-hard an herte, atte laste he shal mishappe and mistyde."

§57. Whanne Melibee hadde herd dame Prudence maken semblant of wratthe, he seyde in this wyse, 'dame, I prey yow that ye be nat displesed of thinges that I seye; for ye knowe wel that I am angry and wrooth, and that is no wonder; and they that been wrothe witen nat wel what they doon, ne what they seyn. Therfore the prophete seith: that "troubled eyen han no cleer sighte." But seyeth and conseilte me as yow lyketh; for I am redy to do right as ye wol desyre; and if ye repreve me of my folye, I am the more holden to love yow and to preyse yow. For Salomon seith: that "he that repreveth him that doth folye, he shal finde gretter grace than he that deceyveth him by swete wordes."

§58. Thanne seide dame Prudence, 'I make no semblant of wratthe ne anger but for your grete profit. For Salomon seith: "he is more worth, that repreveth or chydeth a fool for his folye, shewing him semblant of wratthe, than he that supporteth him and preyseth him in his misdoinge, and laugheth at his folye." And this same Salomon seith afterward: that "by the sorweful visage of a man," that is to seyn, by the sory and hevvy countenance of a man, "the fool correcteth and amendeth him-self."

§59. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'I shal nat conne answeere to so manye faire resouns as ye putten to me and shewen. Seyeth shortly your wil and your conseil, and I am al ready to fulfille and parfourne it.'

§60. Thanne dame Prudence discovered al hir wil to him, and seyde, 'I conseilte yow,' quod she, 'aboven alle thinges, that ye make pees bitwene god and yow; and beth reconciled un-to him and to his grace. For as I have seyde yow heer-biforn, god hath suffred yow to have this tribulacioun and disese for your sinnes. And if ye do as I sey yow, god wol sende your adversaries un-to yow, and maken hem fallen at your feet, redy to do your wil and your comandements. For Salomon seith: "whan the condicioun of man is plesaunt and likinge to god, he chaungeth the hertes of the mannes adversaries, and constreyneth hem to biseken him of pees and of grace." And I prey yow, lat me speke with your adversaries

in privee place; for they shul nat knowe that it be of your wil or your assent. And thanne, whan I knowe hir wil and hir entente, I may conseilte yow the more seurly.'

§61. 'Dame,' quod Melibee, 'dooth your wil and your lykinge, for I putte me hoolly in your disposicioun and ordinaunce.'

§62. Thanne Dame Prudence, whan she saugh the gode wil of her housbonde, delibered and took avys in hir-self, thinkinge how she mighte bringe this nede un-to a good conclusioun and to a good ende. And whan she saugh hir tyme, she sente for thise adversaries to come un-to hir in-to a privee place, and shewed wysly un-to hem the grete goodes that comen of pees, and the grete harmes and perils that been in werre; and seyde to hem in a goodly manere, how that hem oughte have greet repentaunce of the iniurie and wrong that they hadden doon to Melibee hir lord, and to hir, and to hir doghter.

§63. And whan they herden the goodliche wordes of dame Prudence, they weren so surprised and ravished, and hadden so greet loye of hir, that wonder was to telle. 'A! lady!' quod they, 'ye han shewed un-to us "the blessinge of swetnesse," after the sawe of David the prophete; for the reconsilinge which we been nat worthy to have in no manere, but we oghte requeren it with greet contricioun and humiltee, ye of your grete goodnesse have presented unto us. Now see we wel that the science and the conninge of Salomon is ful trewe; for he seith: that "swete wordes multiplyen and encreasen freendes, and maken shrewes to be debonaire and meke."

§64. 'Certes,' quod they, 'we putten our dede and al our matere and cause al hoolly in your goode wil; and been redy to obeie to the speche and comandement of my lord Melibee. And therfore, dere and benigne lady, we preyen yow and biseke yow as mekely as we conne and mowen, that it lyke un-to your grete goodnesse to fulfillen in dede your goodliche wordes; for we consideren and knowlichen that we han offended and greved my lord Melibee out of mesure; so ferforth, that we be nat of power to maken hise amendes. And therfore we oblige and binden us and our freendes to doon al his wil and hise comandements. But peraventure he hath swich hevinesse and swich wratthe to us-ward, by-cause of our offence, that he wole enioyne us swich a payne as we mowe nat here ne sustene. And therfore, noble lady, we biseke to your wommanly pitee, to taken swich avysement in this nede, that we, ne our freendes, be nat desherited ne destroyed thurgh our folye.'

§65. 'Certes,' quod Prudence, 'it is an hard thing and right perilous, that a man putte him al outrely in the arbitracioun and Iuggement, and in the might and power of hise enemys. For Salomon seith: "leveth me, and yeveth credence to that I shal seyn; I seye," quod he, "ye peple, folk, and governours of holy chirche, to thy sone, to thy wyf, to thy freend, ne to thy brother ne yeve thou never might ne maistrie of thy body, whyl thou livest." Now sithen he defendeth, that man shal nat yeven to his brother ne to his freend the might of his body, by a strengre resoun he defendeth and forbedeth a man to yeven him-self to his enemy. And natheles I conseilte you, that ye mistruste nat my lord. For I wool wel and knowe verrailly, that he is debonaire and meke, large, curteys, and nothing desyrous ne coveitous of good ne richesse. For ther nis no-thing in this world that he desyreth, save only worship and honour. Forther-more I knowe wel, and am right seur, that he shal no-thing doon in this nede with-outen my conseil. And I shal so werken in this cause, that, by grace of our lord god, ye shul been reconsiled un-to us.'

§66. Thanne seyden they with o vois, 'worshipful lady, we putten us and our goodes al fully in your wil and disposicioun; and been redy to comen, what day that it lyke un-to your noblesse to limite us or assigne us, for to maken our obligacioun and bond as strong as it lyketh un-to your goodnesse; that we mowe fulfille the wille of yow and of my lord Melibee.'

§67. Whan dame Prudence hadde herd the answeres of thise men, she bad hem goon agayn prively; and she retourned to hir lord Melibee, and tolde him how she fond hise adversaries ful repentant, knowlechinge ful lowely hir sinnes and trespas, and how they were redy to suffren al payne, requiringe and preyinge him of mercy and pitee.

§68. Thanne seyde Melibee, 'he is wel worthy to have pardoun and foryifnesse of his sinne, that excuseth nat his sinne, but knowlecheth it and repenteth him, axinge indulgence. For Senek seith: "ther is the remissioun and foryifnesse, where-as confessioun is;" for confession is neighebores to innocence. And he seith in another place: "he that hath shame for his sinne and knowlecheth it, is worthy remis-sioun." And therfore I assente and conferme me to have pees; but it is good that we do it nat with-outen the assent and wil of our freendes.'

§69. Thanne was Prudence right glad and loyeful, and seyde, 'Certes, sir,' quod she, 'ye han wel and goodly answered. For right as by the conseil, assent, and help of your freendes, ye han been stired to

venge yow and maken werre, right so with-outen hir conseil shul ye nat accorden yow, ne have pees with your adversaries. For the lawe seith: "ther nis no-thing so good by wey of kinde, as a thing to been unbounde by him that it was y-bounde."

§70. And thanne dame Prudence, with-outen delay or taryinge, sente anon hir messages for hir kin, and for hir olde freendes whiche that were trewe and wyse, and tolde hem by ordre, in the presence of Melibee, al this matere as it is aboven expressed and declared; and preyden hem that they wolde yeven hir avys and conseil, what best were to doon in this nede. And whan Melibees freendes hadde taken hir avys and deliberacioun of the forseide matere, and hadden examined it by greet bisnesse and greet diligence, they yave ful conseil for to have pees and reste; and that Melibee sholde receyve with good herte hise adversaries to foryifnesse and mercy.

§71. And whan dame Prudence hadde herd the assent of hir lord Melibee, and the conseil of hise freendes, accorde with hir wille and hir entencioun, she was wonderly glad in hir herte, and seyde: 'ther is an old proverbe,' quod she, 'seith: that "the goodnesse that thou mayst do this day, do it; and abyde nat ne delaye it nat til to-morwe." And therfore I conseilte that ye sende your messages, swiche as been discrete and wyse, un-to your adversaries; tellinge hem, on your bihalve, that if they wole trete of pees and of accord, that they shape hem, with-outen delay or taryinge, to comen un-to us.' Which thing parfourned was in dede. And whanne thise trespassours and repentinge folk of hir folies, that is to seyn, the adversaries of Melibee, hadden herd what thise messagers seyden un-to hem, they weren right glad and loyeful, and answereden ful mekely and benignely, yeldinge graces and thankinges to hir lord Melibee and to al his companye; and shopen hem, with-outen delay, to go with the messagers, and obeie to the comandement of hir lord Melibee.

§72. And right anon they token hir wey to the court of Melibee, and token with hem somme of hir trewe freendes, to maken feith for hem and for to been hir borwes. And whan they were comen to the presence of Melibee, he seyde hem thise wordes: 'it standeth thus,' quod Melibee, 'and sooth it is, that ye, causeless, and with-outen skile and resoun, han doon grete iniuries and wronges to me and to my wyf Prudence, and to my doghter also. For ye han entred in-to myn hous by violence, and have doon swich outrage, that alle men knowen wel that ye have deserved the deeth; and therfore wol I knowe and wite of yow, whether ye wol putte the punisment and the chastysinge and the vengeance of this outrage in the wil of me and of my wyf Prudence; or ye wol nat?'

§73. Thanne the wyseste of hem thre answerde for hem alle, and seyde: 'sire,' quod he, 'we knowen wel, that we been unworthy to comen un-to the court of so greet a lord and so worthy as ye been. For we han so greetly mistaken us, and han offended and agilt in swich a wyse agayn your heigh lordshipe, that trewely we han deserved the deeth. But yet, for the grete goodnesse and debonairetee that all the world witnesseth of your persone, we submitten us to the excellence and benigneite of your gracious lordshipe, and been redy to obeie to alle your comandements; bisekinge yow, that of your merciable pitee ye wol considere our grete repentaunce and lowe submissioun, and graunten us foryevenesse of our outrageous trespass and offence. For wel we knowe, that your liberal grace and mercy stretchen hem ferther in-to goodnesse, than doon our outrageouse giltes and trespass in-to wikkednesse; al-be-it that cursedly and dampnably we han agilt agayn your heigh lordshipe.'

§74. Thanne Melibee took hem up fro the ground ful benignely, and receyved hir obligaciouns and hir bondes by hir othes up-on hir plegges and borwes, and assigned hem a certeyn day to retourne un-to his court, for to accepte and receyve the sentence and Iugement that Melibee wolde comande to be doon on hem by the causes afore-seyd; whiche thinges ordeyned, every man retourned to his hous.

§75. And whan that dame Prudence saugh hir tyme, she freyned and axed hir lord Melibee, what vengeance he thoughte to taken of hise adversaries?

§76. To which Melibee answerde and seyde, 'certes,' quod he, 'I thinke and purpose me fully to desherite hem of al that ever they han, and for to putte hem in exil for ever.'

§77. 'Certes,' quod dame Prudence, 'this were a cruel sentence, and muchel agayn resoun. For ye been riche y-nough, and han no nede of other mennes good; and ye mighte lightly in this wyse gete yow a covetous name, which is a vicious thing, and oghte been eschewed of every good man. For after the sawe of the word of the apostle: "coveitise is rote of alle harmes." And therfore, it were bettre for yow to lese so muchel good of your owene, than for to taken of hir good in this manere. For bettre it is to lesen good with worshipe, than it is to winne good with vileinye and shame. And every man oghte to doon his diligence and his bisnesse to geten him a good name. And yet shal he nat only bisie him in kepinge of his good name, but he shal also enforcen him alwey to do som-thing by which he may

renouvelle his good name; for it is writen, that "the olde good loos or good name of a man is sone goon and passed, whan it is nat newed ne renouelled." And as touchinge that ye seyn, ye wole exile your adversaries, that thinketh me muchel agayn resoun and out of mesure, considered the power that they han yeve yow up-on hem-self. And it is writen, that "he is worthy to lesen his privilege that misuseth the might and the power that is yeven him." And I sette cas ye mighte enioyne hem that payne by right and by lawe, which I trowe ye mowe nat do, I seye, ye mighte nat putten it to execucioun per-aventure, and thanne were it lykly to retourne to the werre as it was biforn. And therfore, if ye wole that men do yow obeisance, ye moste demen more curteisly; this is to seyn, ye moste yeven more esy sentences and Iugements. For it is writen, that "he that most curteisly comandeth, to him men most obeyen." And therfore, I prey yow that in this necessitee and in this nede, ye caste yow to overcome your herte. For Senek seith: that "he that overcometh his herte, overcometh twyes." And Tullius seith: "ther is nothing so comendable in a greet lord as whan he is debonaire and meke, and appeseth him lightly." And I prey yow that ye wole forbere now to do vengeance, in swich a manere, that your goode name may be kept and conserved; and that men mowe have cause and matere to preyse yow of pitee and of mercy; and that ye have no cause to repente yow of thing that ye doon. For Senek seith: "he overcometh in an yvel manere, that repenteth him of his victorie." Wherefore I pray yow, lat mercy been in your minde and in your herte, to theeffect and entente that god almighty have mercy on yow in his laste Iugement. For seint Iame seith in his epistle: "Iugement withouten mercy shal be doon to him, that hath no mercy of another wight."

§78. Whanne Melibee hadde herd the grete skiles and resouns of dame Prudence, and hir wise informaciouns and techinges, his herte gan enclyne to the wil of his wyf, consideringe hir trewe entente; and conformed him anon, and assented fully to werken after hir conseil; and thonked god, of whom procedeth al vertu and alle goodnesse, that him sente a wyf of so greet discrecioun. And whan the day cam that hise adversaries sholde apperen in his presence, he spak unto hem ful goodly, and seyde in this wyse: 'al-be-it so that of your pryde and presumpcioun and folie, and of your necligence and unconninge, ye have misborn yow and trespassed un-to me; yet, for as much as I see and biholde your grete humilitee, and that ye been sory and repentant of your giltes, it constreyneth me to doon yow grace and mercy. Therfore I receyve yow to my grace, and foryeve yow outrely alle the offences, iniuries, and wronges, that ye have doon agayn me and myne; to this effect and to this ende, that god of his endeless mercy wole at the tyme of our dyinge foryeven us our giltes that we han trespassed to him in this wretched world. For doutelees, if we be sory and repentant of the sinnes and giltes whiche we han trespassed in the sighte of our lord god, he is so free and so merciable, that he wole foryeven us our giltes, and bringen us to his blisse that never hath ende. Amen.'

Here is ended Chaucers Tale of Melibee and of Dame Prudence.

THE MONK'S PROLOGUE.

The mery wordes of the Host to the Monk.

Whan ended was my tale of Melibee,
 And of Prudence and hir benigneitee,
 Our hoste seyde, 'as I am faithful man,
 And by the precious *corpus Madrian*,
 I hadde lever than a barel ale
 That goode lief my wyf hadde herd this tale!
 For she nis no-thing of swich pacience
 As was this Melibeus wyf Prudence.
 By goddes bones! whan I bete my knaves,
 She bringth me forth the grete clobbed staves,
 And cryeth, "slee the dogges everichoon,
 And brek hem, bothe bak and every boon."
 And if that any neighebor of myne
 Wol nat in chirche to my wyf enclyne,
 Or be so hardy to hir to trespassen,
 Whan she comth hoom, she rampeth in my face,
 And cryeth, "false coward, wreck thy wyf,

By *corpus* bones! I wol have thy knyf,
And thou shalt have my distaf and go spinne!"
Fro day to night right thus she wol biginne;—
"Allas!" she seith, "that ever I was shape
To wedde a milksop or a coward ape,
That wol be overlad with every wight!
Thou darst nat stonden by thy wyves right!"
This is my lyf, but-if that I wol fighte;
And out at dore anon I moot me dighte,
Or elles I am but lost, but-if that I
Be lyk a wilde leoun fool-hardy.
I woot wel she wol do me slee som day
Som neighebor, and thanne go my wey.
For I am perilous with knyf in honde,
Al be it that I dar nat hir withstonde,
For she is big in armes, by my feith,
That shal he finde, that hir misdooth or seith.
But lat us passe away fro this matere.
My lord the Monk,' quod he, 'be mery of chere;
For ye shul telle a tale trewely.
Lo! Rouchestre stant heer faste by!
Ryd forth, myn owene lord, brek nat our game,
But, by my trouthe, I knowe nat your name,
Wher shal I calle yow my lord dan Iohn,
Or dan Thomas, or elles dan Albon?
Of what hous be ye, by your fader kin?
I vow to god, thou, hast a ful fair skin,
It is a gentil pasture ther thou goost;
Thou art nat lyk a penaunt or a goost.
Upon my feith, thou art som officer,
Som worthy sexteyn, or som celerer,
For by my fader soule, as to my doom,
Thou art a maister whan thou art at hoom;
No povre cloisterer, ne no novys,
But a governour, wyly and wys.
And therwithal of brawnes and of bones
A wel-faring persone for the nones.
I pray to god, yeve him confusioun
That first thee broghte un-to religioun;
Thou woldest han been a trede-foul aright.
Haddestow as greet a leve, as thou hast might
To parfourne al thy lust in engendrure,
Thou haddest bigeten many a creature.
Alas! why werestow so wyd a cope?
God yeve me sorwe! but, and I were a pope,
Not only thou, but every mighty man,
Thogh he were shorn ful hye upon his pan,
Sholde have a wyf; for al the world is lorn!
Religioun hath take up al the corn
Of treading, and we borel men ben shrimpes!
Of feble trees ther comen wrecched impes.
This maketh that our heires been so sclendre
And feble, that they may nat wel engendre.
This maketh that our wyves wol assaye
Religious folk, for ye may bettre paye

Of Venus payements than mowe we;
 God woot, no lussheburghes payen ye!
 But be nat wrooth, my lord, for that I pleye;
 Ful ofte in game a sooth I have herd seye.
 This worthy monk took al in pacience,
 And seyde, 'I wol doon al my diligence,
 As fer as souneth in-to honestee,
 To telle yow a tale, or two, or three.
 And if yow list to herkne hiderward,
 I wol yow seyn the lyf of seint Edward;
 Or elles first Tragedies wol I telle
 Of whiche I have an hundred in my celle.
 Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie,
 As olde bokes maken us memorie,
 Of him that stood in greet prosperitee
 And is y-fallen out of heigh degree
 Into miserie, and endeth wrecchedly.
 And they ben versifyed comunly
 Of six feet, which men clepe *exametron*.
 In prose eek been endyted many oon,
 And eek in metre, in many a sondry wyse.
 Lo! this declaring oughte y-nough suffice.
 Now herkneth, if yow lyketh for to here;
 But first I yow biseke in this matere,
 Though I by ordre telle nat thise thinges,
 Be it of popes, emperours, or kinges,
 After hir ages, as men writen finde,
 But telle hem som bifore and som bihinde,
 As it now comth un-to my remembraunce;
 Have me excused of myn ignoraunce.'
Explicit.

THE MONKES TALE.

Here biginneth the Monkes Tale, de Casibus Virorum Illustrium.

I wol biwayle in maner of Tragedie
 The harm of hem that stode in heigh degree,
 And fillen so that ther nas no remedie
 To bringe hem out of hir adversitee;
 For certein, whan that fortune list to flee,
 Ther may no man the cours of hir withholde;
 Lat no man truste on blind prosperitee;
 Be war by thise ensamples trewe and olde.
 At Lucifer, though he an angel were,
 And nat a man, at him I wol biginne;
 For, though fortune may non angel dere,
 From heigh degree yet fel he for his sinne
 Doun in-to helle, wher he yet is inne.
 O Lucifer! brightest of angels alle,
 Now artow Sathanas, that maist nat twinne
 Out of miserie, in which that thou art falle.
 ADAM.
 Lo Adam, in the feld of Damassene,
 With goddes owene finger wrought was he,
 And nat bigeten of mannes sperme unclene,

And welte al Paradys, saving o tree.
 Had never worldly man so heigh degree
 As Adam, til he for misgovernaunce
 Was drive out of his hye prosperitee
 To labour, and to helle, and to meschaunce.
 SAMPSON.
 Lo Sampson, which that was annunciat
 By thangel, longe er his nativitee,
 And was to god almighty consecrat,
 And stood in noblesse, whyl he mighte see.
 Was never swich another as was he,
 To speke of strengthe, and therwith hardinesse;
 But to his wyves tolde he his secree,
 Through which he slow him-self, for wrecchednesse.
 Sampson, this noble almighty champioun,
 Withouten wepen save his hondes tweye,
 He slow and al to-rente the leoun,
 Toward his wedding walking by the weye.
 His false wyf coude him so plese and preye
 Til she his conseil knew, and she untrew
 Un-to his foos his conseil gan biwrewe,
 And him forsook, and took another newe.
 Three hundred foxes took Sampson for ire,
 And alle hir tayles he togider bond,
 And sette the foxes tayles alle on fire,
 For he on every tayl had knit a brond;
 And they brende alle the cornes in that lond,
 And alle hir oliveres and vynes eek.
 A thousand men he slow eek with his hond,
 And had no wepen but an asses cheke.
 Whan they were slayn, so thursted him that he
 Was wel my lorn, for which he gan to preye
 That god wolde on his peyne han som pitee,
 And sende him drinke, or elles moste he deye;
 And of this asses cheke, that was dreye,
 Out of a wang-tooth sprang anon a welle,
 Of which he drank y-nogh, shortly to seye,
 Thus heelp him god, as *Iudicum* can telle.
 By verray force, at Gazan, on a night,
 Maugree Philistiens of that citee,
 The gates of the toun he hath up-plight,
 And on his bak y-caried hem hath he
 Hye on an hille, that men mighte hem see.
 O noble almighty Sampson, leef and dere,
 Had thou nat told to wommen thy secree,
 In al this worlde ne hadde been thy pere!
 This Sampson never sicer drank ne wyn,
 Ne on his heed cam rasour noon ne shere,
 By precept of the messenger divyn,
 For alle his strengthes in his heres were;
 And fully twenty winter, yeer by yeer,
 He hadde of Israel the governaunce.
 But sone shal he wepen many a tere,
 For wommen shal him bringen to meschaunce!
 Un-to his lemman Dalida he tolde

That in his heres al his strengthe lay,
 And falsly to his fo-men she him solde.
 And sleping in hir barme up-on a day
 She made to clippe or shere his heer away,
 And made his fo-men al his craft espyen;
 And whan that they him fonde in this array,
 They bounde him faste, and putten out his yën.
 But er his heer were clipped or y-shave,
 Ther was no bond with which men might him binde;
 But now is he in prisoun in a cave,
 Wher-as they made him at the querne grinde.
 O noble Sampson, strongest of mankinde,
 O whylom Iuge in glorie and in richesse,
 Now maystow wepen with thyn yën blinde,
 Sith thou fro wele art falle in wrecchednesse.
 Thende of this caytif was as I shal seye;
 His fo-men made a feste upon a day,
 And made him as hir fool bifore hem pleye,
 And this was in a temple of greet array.
 But atte laste he made a foul affray;
 For he two pilers shook, and made hem falle,
 And doun fil temple and al, and ther it lay,
 And slow him-self, and eek his fo-men alle.
 This is to seyn, the princes everichoon,
 And eek three thousand bodies wer ther slayn
 With falling of the grete temple of stoon.
 Of Sampson now wol I na-more seyn.
 Beth war by this ensample old and playn
 That no men telle hir conseil til hir wyves
 Of swich thing as they wolde han secree fayn,
 If that it touche hir limmes or hir lyves.

HERCULES.

Of Hercules the sovereyn conquerour
 Singen his workes laude and heigh renoun;
 For in his tyme of strengthe he was the flour.
 He slow, and rafte the skin of the leoun;
 He of Centauros leyde the boost adoun;
 He Arpies slow, the cruel briddes felle;
 He golden apples rafte of the dragoun;
 He drow out Cerberus, the hound of helle:
 He slow the cruel tyrant Busirus,
 And made his hors to frete him, flesh and boon;
 He slow the firy serpent venimous;
 Of Achelois two hornes, he brak oon;
 And he slow Cacus in a cave of stoon;
 He slow the geaunt Antheus the stronge;
 He slow the grisly boor, and that anoon,
 And bar the heven on his nekke longe.
 Was never wight, sith that the world bigan,
 That slow so many monstres as dide he.
 Thurgh-out this wyde world his name ran,
 What for his strengthe, and for his heigh bountee,
 And every reaume wente he for to see.
 He was so strong that no man mighte him lette;
 At bothe the worldes endes, seith Trophee,

In stede of boundes, he a piler sette.
A lemman hadde this noble champioun,
That highte Dianira, fresh as May;
And, as thise clerkes maken menciouun,
She hath him sent a sherte fresh and gay.
Allas! this sherte, alas and weylaway!
Envenimed was so subtilly with-alle,
That, er that he had wered it half a day,
It made his flesh al from his bones falle.
But nathelees somme clerkes hir excusen
By oon that highte Nessus, that it maked;
Be as be may, I wol hir noght accusen;
But on his bak this sherte he wered al naked,
Til that his flesh was for the venim blaked.
And whan he sey noon other remedye,
In hote coles he hath him-selven raked,
For with no venim deyed him to dye.
Thus starf this worthy mighty Hercules;
Lo, who may truste on fortune any throwe?
For him that folweth al this world of prees,
Er he be war, is ofte y-leyd ful lowe.
Ful wys is he that can him-selven knowe.
Beth war, for whan that fortune list to glose,
Than wayteth she hir man to overthrowe
By swich a wey as he wolde leest suppose.
NABUGODONOSOR (NEBUCHADNEZZAR).
The mighty trone, the precious tresor,
The glorious ceptre and royal magestee
That hadde the king Nabugodonosor,
With tonge unnethe may discryved be.
He twyes wan Ierusalem the citee;
The vessel of the temple he with him ladde.
At Babiloyne was his sovereyn see,
In which his glorie and his delyt he hadde.
The fairest children of the blood royal
Of Israel he leet do gelde anoon,
And maked ech of hem to been his thral.
Amonges othere Daniel was oon,
That was the wysest child of everichoon;
For he the dremes of the king expounded,
Wher-as in Chaldey clerk ne was ther noon
That wiste to what fyn his dremes souned.
This proude king leet make a statue of golde,
Sixty cubytes long, and seven in brede,
To which image bothe yonge and olde
Comaunded he to loute, and have in drede;
Or in a fourneys ful of flambes rede
He shal be brent, that wolde noght obeye.
But never wolde assente to that dede
Daniel, ne his yonge felawes tweye.
This king of kinges proud was and elaat,
He wende that god, that sit in magestee,
Ne mighte him nat bireve of his estaat:
But sodeynly he loste his dignitee,
And lyk a beste him semed for to be,

And eet hay as an oxe, and lay ther-oute;
 In reyn with wilde bestes walked he,
 Til certein tyme was y-come aboute.
 And lyk an egles fetheres wexe his heres,
 His nayles lyk a briddes clawes were;
 Til god relessed him a certein yeres,
 And yaf him wit; and than with many a tere
 He thanked god, and ever his lyf in fere
 Was he to doon amis, or more trespase;
 And, til that tyme he leyd was on his bere,
 He knew that god was ful of might and grace.
 BALTHASAR (BELSHAZZAR).
 His sone, which that highte Balthasar,
 That heeld the regne after his fader day,
 He by his fader coude nought be war,
 For proud he was of herte and of array;
 And eek an ydolastre was he ay.
 His hye estaat assured him in pryde.
 But fortune caste him down, and ther he lay,
 And sodeynly his regne gan divyde.
 A feste he made un-to his lordes alle
 Up-on a tyme, and bad hem blythe be,
 And than his officeres gan he calle—
 'Goth, bringeth forth the vessels,' [tho] quod he,
 'Which that my fader, in his prosperitee,
 Out of the temple of Ierusalem birafte,
 And to our hye goddes thanke we
 Of honour, that our eldres with us lafte.'
 His wyf, his lordes, and his concubynes
 Ay dronken, whyl hir appetytes laste,
 Out of thise noble vessels sundry wynes;
 And on a wal this king his yën caste,
 And sey an hond armlees, that wroot ful faste,
 For fere of which he quook and syked sore.
 This hond, that Balthasar so sore agaste,
 Wroot *Mane, techel, phares*, and na-more.
 In al that lond magicien was noon
 That coude expounne what this lettre mente;
 But Daniel expounded it anoon,
 And seyde, 'king, god to thy fader lente
 Glorie and honour, regne, tresour, rente:
 And he was proud, and no-thing god ne dradde,
 And therfor god gret wreche up-on him sente,
 And him birafte the regne that he hadde.
 He was out cast of mannes companye,
 With asses was his habitacioun,
 And eet hey as a beste in weet and drye,
 Til that he knew, by grace and by resoun,
 That god of heven hath dominacioun
 Over every regne and every creature;
 And thanne had god of him compassioun,
 And him restored his regne and his figure.
 Eek thou, that art his sone, art proud also,
 And knowest alle thise thinges verrailly,
 And art rebel to god, and art his fo.

Thou drank eek of his vessels boldely;
 Thy wyf eek and thy wenches sinfully
 Dronke of the same vessels sondry wyne,
 And heriest false goddes cursedly;
 Therfor to thee y-shapen ful gret pyne is.
 This hand was sent from god, that on the walle
 Wroot *mane, techel, phares*, truste me;
 Thy regne is doon, thou weyest noght at alle;
 Divyded is thy regne, and it shal be
 To Medes and to Perses yeven,' quod he.
 And thilke same night this king was slawe,
 And Darius occupyeth his degree,
 Thogh he therto had neither right ne lawe.
 Lordinges, ensample heer-by may ye take
 How that in lordshipe is no sikernes;e;
 For whan fortune wol a man forsake,
 She bereth away his regne and his richesse,
 And eek his freendes, bothe more and lesse;
 For what man that hath freendes thurgh fortune,
 Mishap wol make hem enemys, I gesse:
 This proverbe is ful sooth and ful commune.
 CENOBIA (ZENOBIA).
 Cenobia, of Palimerie quene,
 As writen Persiens of hir noblesse,
 So worthy was in armes and so kene,
 That no wight passed hir in hardinesse,
 Ne in linage, ne in other gentillesse.
 Of kinges blode of Perse is she descended;
 I seye nat that she hadde most fairnesse,
 But of hir shape she mighte nat been amended.
 From hir childhede I finde that she fledde
 Office of wommen, and to wode she wente;
 And many a wilde hertes blood she shedde
 With arwes brode that she to hem sente.
 She was so swift that she anon hem hente,
 And whan that she was elder, she wolde kille
 Leouns, lepardes, and beres al to-rente,
 And in hir armes welde hem at hir wille.
 She dorste wilde beestes dennes seke,
 And rennen in the montaignes al the night,
 And slepen under a bush, and she coude eke
 Wrastlen by verray force and verray might
 With any yong man, were he never so wight;
 Ther mighte no-thing in hir armes stonde.
 She kepte hir maydenhod from every wight,
 To no man deigned hir for to be bonde.
 But atte laste hir frendes han hir married
 To Odenake, a prince of that contree,
 Al were it so that she hem longe taried;
 And ye shul understonde how that he
 Hadde swiche fantasyes as hadde she.
 But nathelees, whan they were knit in-fere,
 They lived in loye and in felicitee;
 For ech of hem hadde other leef and dere.
 Save o thing, that she never wolde assente

By no wey, that he sholde by hir lye
 But ones, for it was hir pleyn entente
 To have a child, the world to multiplie;
 And al-so sone as that she mighte espye
 That she was nat with childe with that dede,
 Than wolde she suffre him doon his fantasye
 Eft-sone, and nat but ones, out of drede.
 And if she were with childe at thilke cast,
 Na-more sholde he pleyen thilke game
 Til fully fourty dayes weren past;
 Than wolde she ones suffre him do the same.
 Al were this Odenake wilde or tame,
 He gat na-more of hir, for thus she seyde,
 'It was to wyves lecherye and shame
 In other cas, if that men with hem pleyde.'
 Two sones by this Odenake hadde she,
 The whiche she kepte in vertu and lettrure;
 But now un-to our tale turne we.
 I seye, so worshipful a creature,
 And wys therwith, and large with mesure,
 So penible in the warre, and curteis eke,
 Ne more labour mighte in werre endure,
 Was noon, thogh al this world men sholde seke.
 Hir riche array ne mighte nat be told
 As wel in vessel as in hir clothing;
 She was al clad in perree and in gold,
 And eek she lafte noght, for noon hunting,
 To have of sondry tonges ful knowing,
 Whan that she leyser hadde, and for to entende
 To lernen bokes was al hir lyking,
 How she in vertu mighte hir lyf dispende.
 And, shortly of this storie for to trete,
 So doughty was hir housbonde and eek she,
 That they conquered many regnes grete
 In the orient, with many a fair citee,
 Apertenaunt un-to the magestee
 Of Rome, and with strong hond helde hem ful faste;
 Ne never mighte hir fo-men doon hem flee,
 Ay whyl that Odenakes dayes laste.
 Hir batailes, who-so list hem for to rede,
 Agayn Sapor the king and othere mo,
 And how that al this proces fil in dede,
 Why she conquered and what title had therto,
 And after of hir meschief and hir wo,
 How that she was biseged and y-take,
 Let him un-to my maister Petrark go,
 That writ y-nough of this, I undertake.
 When Odenake was deed, she mightily
 The regnes heeld, and with hir propre honde
 Agayn hir foos she faught so cruelly,
 That ther nas king ne prince in al that londe
 That he nas glad, if that he grace fonde,
 That she ne wolde up-on his lond werreye;
 With hir they made alliaunce by bonde
 To been in pees, and lete hir ryde and pleye.

The emperour of Rome, Claudius,
 Ne him bifore, the Romayn Galien,
 Ne dorste never been so corageous,
 Ne noon Ermyn, ne noon Egipcien,
 Ne Surrien, ne noon Arabien,
 Within the feld that dorste with hir fighte
 Lest that she wolde hem with hir hondes slen,
 Or with hir meynnee putten hem to flighte.
 In kinges habit wente hir sones two,
 As heires of hir fadres regnes alle,
 And Hermanno, and Thymalaö
 Her names were, as Persiens hem calle.
 But ay fortune hath in hir hony galle;
 This mighty quene may no whyl endure.
 Fortune out of hir regne made hir falle
 To wrecchednesse and to misaventure.
 Aurelian, whan that the governaunce
 Of Rome cam in-to his hondes tweye,
 He shoop up-on this queen to do vengeaunce,
 And with his legiouns he took his weye
 Toward Cenobie, and, shortly for to seye,
 He made hir flee, and atte laste hir hente,
 And fettred hir, and eek hir children tweye,
 And wan the lond, and hoom to Rome he wente.
 Amonges othere thinges that he wan,
 Hir char, that was with gold wrought and perree,
 This grete Romayn, this Aurelian,
 Hath with him lad, for that men sholde it see.
 Biforen his triumphe walketh she
 With gilte cheynes on hir nekke hanging;
 Corouned was she, as after hir degree,
 And ful of perree charged hir clothing.
 Allas, fortune! she that whylom was
 Dredful to kinges and to emperoures,
 Now gaureth al the peple on hir, allas!
 And she that helmed was in starke stoures,
 And wan by force tounes stronge and toures,
 Shal on hir heed now were a vitremyte;
 And she that bar the ceptre ful of floures
 Shal bere a distaf, hir cost for to quyte.
 DE PETRO REGE ISPANNIE.
 O noble, o worthy Petro, glorie of Spayne,
 Whom fortune heeld so hy in magestee,
 Wel oughten men thy pitous deeth complayne!
 Out of thy lond thy brother made thee flee;
 And after, at a sege, by subtiltee,
 Thou were bitrayed, and lad un-to his tente,
 Wher-as he with his owene hond slow thee,
 Succeding in thy regne and in thy rente.
 The feeld of snow, with thegle of blak ther-inne,
 Caught with the lymrod, coloured as the glede,
 He brew this cursednes and al this sinne.
 The 'wikked nest' was werker of this nede;
 Noght Charles Oliver, that ay took hede
 Of trouthe and honour, but of Armorike

Genilon Oliver, corrupt for mede,
 Broghte this worthy king in swich a brike.
 DE PETRO REGE DE CIPRO.
 O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also,
 That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,
 Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,
 Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,
 And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye,
 They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the morwe.
 Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and gye,
 And out of Ioye bringe men to sorwe.
 DE BARNABO DE LUMBARDIA.
 Of Melan grete Barnabo Viscounte,
 God of delyt, and scourge of Lumbardy,
 Why sholde I nat thyn infortune acounte,
 Sith in estaat thou clombe were so hye?
 Thy brother sone, that was thy double allye,
 For he thy nevew was, and sone-in-lawe,
 With-inne his prisoun made thee to dye;
 But why, ne how, noot I that thou were slawe.
 DE HUGELINO, COMITE DE PIZE.
 Of the erl Hugelyn of Pyse the langour
 Ther may no tonge telle for pitee;
 But litel out of Pyse stant a tour,
 In whiche tour in prisoun put was he,
 And with him been his litel children three.
 The eldeste scarsly fyf yeer was of age.
 Allas, fortune! it was greet crueltee
 Swiche briddes for to putte in swiche a cage!
 Dampned was he to deye in that prisoun,
 For Roger, which that bisshop was of Pyse,
 Hadde on him maad a fals suggestioun,
 Thurgh which the peple gan upon him ryse,
 And putten him to prisoun in swich wyse
 As ye han herd, and mete and drink he hadde
 So smal, that wel unnethe it may suffyse,
 And therwith-al it was ful povre and badde.
 And on a day bifil that, in that hour,
 Whan that his mete wont was to be broght,
 The gayler shette the dores of the tour.
 He herde it wel,—but he spak right noght,
 And in his herte anon ther fil a thoght,
 That they for hunger wolde doon him dyen.
 'Allas!' quod he, 'allas! that I was wroght!'

Therwith the teres fillen from his yën.
 His yonge sone, that three yeer was of age,
 Un-to him seyde, 'fader, why do ye wepe?
 Whan wol the gayler bringen our potage,
 Is ther no morsel breed that ye do kepe?
 I am so hungry that I may nat slepe,
 Now wolde god that I mighte slepen ever!
 Than sholde nat hunger in my wombe crepe;
 Ther is no thing, save breed, that me were lever.'
 Thus day by day this child bigan to crye,
 Til in his fadres barme adoun it lay,

And seyde, 'far-wel, fader, I moot dye,'
 And kiste his fader, and deyde the same day.
 And whan the woful fader deed it sey,
 For wo his armes two he gan to byte,
 And seyde, 'allas, fortune! and weylaway!
 Thy false wheel my wo al may I wyte!'
 His children wende that it for hunger was
 That he his armes gnow, and nat for wo,
 And seyde, 'fader, do nat so, alas!
 But rather eet the flesh upon us two;
 Our flesh thou yaf us, tak our flesh us fro
 And eet y-nough:' right thus they to him seyde,
 And after that, with-in a day or two,
 They leyde hem in his lappe adoun, and deyde.
 Him-self, despeired, eek for hunger starf;
 Thus ended is this mighty Erl of Pyse;
 From heigh estaat fortune away him carf.
 Of this Tragedie it oghte y-nough suffyse.
 Who-so wol here it in a lenger wyse,
 Redeth the grete poete of Itaille,
 That highte Dant, for he can al devyse
 Fro point to point, nat o word wol he faille.
 NERO.

Al-though that Nero were as vicious
 As any feend that lyth ful lowe adoun,
 Yet he, as telleth us Swetonius,
 This wyde world hadde in subieccioun,
 Both Est and West, South and Septemtrioun;
 Of rubies, saphires, and of perles whyte
 Were alle his clothes brouded up and doun;
 For he in gemmes greetly gan delyte.
 More delicat, more pompous of array,
 More proud was never emperour than he;
 That ilke cloth, that he had wered o day,
 After that tyme he nolde it never see.
 Nettes of gold-thred hadde he gret plentee
 To fissue in Tybre, whan him liste pleye.
 His lustes were al lawe in his decree,
 For fortune as his freend him wolde obeye.
 He Rome brende for his delicacye;
 The senatours he slow up-on a day.
 To here how men wolde wepe and crye;
 And slow his brother, and by his sister lay.
 His moder made he in pitous array;
 For he hir wombe slitte, to biholde
 Wher he conceyved was; so weilaway!
 That he so litel of his moder tolde!
 No tere out of his yën for that sighte
 Ne cam, but seyde, 'a fair womman was she.'
 Gret wonder is, how that he coude or mighte
 Be domesman of hir dede beautee.
 The wyn to bringen him comaunded he,
 And drank anon; non other wo he made.
 Whan might is loyned un-to crueltee,
 Allas! to depe wol the venim wade!

In youthe a maister hadde this emperour,
 To teche him letterure and curteisye,
 For of moralitee he was the flour,
 As in his tyme, but-if bokes lye;
 And whyl this maister hadde of him maistrye,
 He maked him so conning and so souple
 That longe tyme it was er tirannye
 Or any vyce dorste on him uncouple.
 This Seneca, of which that I devyse,
 By-cause Nero hadde of him swich drede,
 For he fro vyces wolde him ay chastyse
 Discreetly as by worde and nat by dede;—
 'Sir,' wolde he seyn, 'an emperour moot nede
 Be vertuous, and hate tirannye'—
 For which he in a bath made him to blede
 On bothe his armes, til he moste dye.
 This Nero hadde eek of acustumaunce
 In youthe ageyn his maister for to ryse,
 Which afterward him thoughte a greet grevaunce;
 Therfor he made him deyen in this wyse.
 But natheles this Seneca the wyse
 Chees in a bath to deye in this manere
 Rather than han another tormentyse;
 And thus hath Nero slayn his maister dere.
 Now fil it so that fortune list no lenger
 The hye pryde of Nero to cheryce;
 For though that he were strong, yet was she strengier;
 She thoughte thus, 'by god, I am to nyce
 To sette a man that is fulfild of vyce
 In heigh degree, and emperour him calle.
 By god, out of his sete I wol him tryce;
 When he leest weneth, sonest shal he falle.'
 The peple roos up-on him on a night
 For his defaute, and whan he it espyed,
 Out of his dores anon he hath him dight
 Alone, and, ther he wende han ben allyed,
 He knocked faste, and ay, the more he cryed,
 The faster shette they the dores alle;
 Tho wiste he wel he hadde him-self misgyed,
 And wente his wey, no lenger dorste he calle.
 The peple cryde and rombled up and down,
 That with his eres herde he how they seyde,
 'Wher is this false tyraunt, this Neroun?'
 For fere almost out of his wit he breyde,
 And to his goddes pitously he preyde
 For socour, but it mighte nat bityde.
 For drede of this, him thoughte that he deyde,
 And ran in-to a gardin, him to hyde.
 And in this gardin fond he cherles tweye
 That seten by a fyr ful greet and reed,
 And to thise cherles two he gan to preye
 To sleen him, and to girden of his heed,
 That to his body, whan that he were deed,
 Were no despyt y-doon, for his defame.
 Him-self he slow, he coude no better reed,

Of which fortune lough, and hadde a game.
DE OLOFERNO (HOLOFERNES).
Was never capitayn under a king
That regnes mo putte in subieccioun,
Ne strengier was in feeld of alle thing,
As in his tyme, ne gretter of renoun,
Ne more pompous in heigh presumpcioun
Than Oloferne, which fortune ay kiste
So likerously, and ladde him up and doun
Til that his heed was of, er that he wiste.
Nat only that this world hadde him in awe
For lesinge of richesse or libertee,
But he made every man reneye his lawe.
'Nabugodonosor was god,' seyde he,
'Noon other god sholde adoured be.'
Ageyns his heste no wight dar trespace
Save in Bethulia, a strong citee,
Wher Eliachim a prest was of that place.
But tak kepe of the deeth of Olofern;
Amidde his host he dronke lay a night,
With-inne his tente, large as is a bern,
And yit, for al his pompe and al his might,
Iudith, a womman, as he lay upright,
Sleping, his heed of smoot, and from his tente
Ful prively she stal from every wight,
And with his heed unto hir toun she wente.
What nedeth it of King Anthiochus
To telle his hye royal magestee,
His hye pryde, his werkes venimous?
For swich another was ther noon as he.
Rede which that he was in Machabee,
And rede the proude wordes that he seyde,
And why he fil fro heigh prosperitee,
And in an hil how wrechedly he deyde.
Fortune him hadde enhaunced so in pryde
That verrailly he wende he mighte attayne
Unto the sterres, upon every syde,
And in balance weyen ech montayne,
And alle the flodes of the see restrayne.
And goddes peple hadde he most in hate,
Hem wolde he sleen in torment and in payne,
Wening that god ne mighte his pryde abate.
And for that Nichanor and Thimothee
Of Iewes weren venquissed mightily,
Unto the Iewes swich an hate hadde he
That he bad greithe his char ful hastily,
And swoor, and seyde, ful despitously,
Unto Ierusalem he wolde eft-sone,
To wreken his ire on it ful cruelly;
But of his purpos he was let ful sone.
God for his manace him so sore smoot
With invisible wounde, ay incurable,
That in his guttes carf it so and boot
That his peynes weren importable.
And certainly, the wreche was resonable,

For many a mannes guttes dide he peyne;
 But from his purpos cursed and dampnable
 For al his smert he wolde him nat restreyne;
 But bad anon apparailen his host,
 And sodeynly, er he of it was war,
 God daunted al his pryde and al his bost.
 For he so sore fil out of his char,
 That it his limes and his skin to-tar,
 So that he neither mighte go ne ryde,
 But in a chayer men aboute him bar,
 Al for-brused, bothe bak and syde.
 The wreche of god him smoot so cruelly
 That thurgh his body wikked wormes crepte;
 And ther-with-al he stank so horribly,
 That noon of al his meynee that him kepte,
 Whether so he wook or elles slepte,
 Ne mighte noght for stink of him endure.
 In this meschief he wayled and eek wepte,
 And knew god lord of every creature.
 To al his host and to him-self also
 Ful wlatson was the stink of his careyne;
 No man ne mighte him bere to ne fro.
 And in this stink and this horrible peyne
 He starf ful wrecchedly in a monteyne.
 Thus hath this robbour and this homicyde,
 That many a man made to wepe and pleyne,
 Swich guerdon as bilongeth unto pryde.
 The storie of Alisaundre is so comune,
 That every wight that hath discrecioun
 Hath herd somewhat or al of his fortune.
 This wyde world, as in conclusioun,
 He wan by strengthe, or for his hye renoun
 They weren glad for pees un-to him sende.
 The pryde of man and beste he leyde adoun,
 Wher-so he cam, un-to the worldes ende.
 Comparisoun might never yit be maked
 Bitwixe him and another conquerour;
 For al this world for drede of him hath quaked,
 He was of knighthode and of fredom flour;
 Fortune him made the heir of hir honour;
 Save wyn and wommen, no-thing mighte aswage
 His hye entente in armes and labour;
 So was he ful of leonyn corage.
 What preys were it to him, though I yow tolde
 Of Darius, and an hundred thousand mo,
 Of kinges, princes, erles, dukes bolde,
 Whiche he conquered, and broghte hem in-to wo?
 I seye, as fer as man may ryde or go,
 The world was his, what sholde I more devyse?
 For though I write or tolde you evermo
 Of his knighthode, it mighte nat suffyse.
 Twelf yeer he regned, as seith Machabee;
 Philippes sone of Macedoyne he was,
 That first was king in Grece the contree.
 O worthy gentil Alisaundre, allas!

That ever sholde fallen swich a cas!
Empoisoned of thyn owene folk thou were;
Thy sys fortune hath turned into *as*;
And yit for thee ne weep she never a tere!
Who shal me yeven teres to compleyne
The deeth of gentillesse and of fraunchyse,
That al the world welded in his demeyne,
And yit him thoughte it mighte nat suffyse?
So ful was his corage of heigh emprise.
Allas! who shal me helpe to endyte
False fortune, and poison to despyse,
The whiche two of al this wo I wyte?
By wisdom, manhede, and by greet labour
Fro humble bed to royal magestee,
Up roos he, Iulius the conquerour,
That wan al thoccident by lond and see,
By strengthe of hond, or elles by tretee,
And un-to Rome made hem tributarie;
And sitthe of Rome the emperour was he,
Til that fortune wex his adversarie.
O mighty Cesar, that in Thessalye
Ageyn Pompeius, fader thyn in lawe,
That of thorient hadde al the chivalrye
As fer as that the day biginneth dawe,
Thou thurgh thy knighthode hast hem take and slawe,
Save fewe folk that with Pompeius fledde,
Thurgh which thou putttest al thorient in awe.
Thanke fortune, that so wel thee spedde!
But now a litel whyl I wol biwaille
This Pompeius, this noble governour
Of Rome, which that fleigh at this bataille;
I seye, oon of his men, a fals traitour,
His heed of smoot, to winnen him favour
Of Iulius, and him the heed he broghte.
Allas, Pompey, of thorient conquerour,
That fortune unto swich a fyn thee broghte!
To Rome ageyn repaireth Iulius
With his triumphe, laureat ful hye,
But on a tyme Brutus Cassius,
That ever hadde of his hye estaat envye,
Ful prively hath maad conspiracye
Ageins this Iulius, in subtil wyse,
And cast the place, in whiche he sholde dye
With boydekins, as I shal yow devyse.
This Iulius to the Capitolie wente
Upon a day, as he was wont to goon,
And in the Capitolie anon him hente
This false Brutus, and his othere foon,
And stikede him with boydekins anoon
With many a wounde, and thus they lete him lye;
But never gronte he at no strook but oon,
Or elles at two, but-if his storie lye.
So manly was this Iulius at herte
And so wel lovede estaatly honestee,
That, though his deedly woundes sore smerte,

His mantel over his hippes casteth he,
 For no man sholde seen his privitee.
 And, as he lay on deying in a traunce,
 And wiste verrailly that deed was he,
 Of honestee yit hadde he remembraunce.
 Lucan, to thee this storie I recomende,
 And to Sweton, and to Valerie also,
 That of this storie wryten word and ende,
 How that to thise grete conqueroures two
 Fortune was first freend, and sithen fo.
 No man ne truste up-on hir favour longe,
 But have hir in awayt for ever-mo.
 Witnessse on alle thise conqueroures stronge.
 This riche Cresus, whylom king of Lyde,
 Of whiche Cresus Cyrus sore him dradde,
 Yit was he caught amidde al his pryde,
 And to be brent men to the fyr him ladde.
 But swich a reyn down fro the welkne shadde
 That slow the fyr, and made him to escape;
 But to be war no grace yet he hadde,
 Til fortune on the galwes made him gape.
 Whan he escaped was, he can nat stente
 For to biginne a newe werre agayn.
 He wende wel, for that fortune him sente
 Swich hap, that he escaped thurgh the rayn,
 That of his foos he mighte nat be slayn;
 And eek a sweven up-on a night he mette,
 Of which he was so proud and eek so fayn,
 That in vengeaunce he al his herte sette.
 Up-on a tree he was, as that him thoughte,
 Ther Iuppiter him wesh, bothe bak and syde,
 And Phebus eek a fair towaille him broughte
 To drye him with, and ther-for wex his pryde;
 And to his doghter, that stood him bisyde,
 Which that he knew in heigh science habounde,
 He bad hir telle him what it signifyde,
 And she his dreem bigan right thus expounde.
 'The tree,' quod she, 'the galwes is to mene,
 And Iuppiter bitokneth snow and reyn,
 And Phebus, with his towaille so clene,
 Tho ben the sonne stremes for to seyn;
 Thou shalt anhangd be, fader, certeyn;
 Reyn shal thee wasshe, and sonne shal thee drye;'
 Thus warned she him ful plat and ful pleyn,
 His doughter, which that called was Phanye.
 Anhangd was Cresus, the proude king,
 His royal trone mighte him nat availle.—
 Tragedie is noon other maner thing,
 Ne can in singing crye ne biwaille,
 But for that fortune alwey wol assaille
 With unwar strook the regnes that ben proude;
 For when men trusteth hir, than wol she faille,
 And covere hir brighte face with a cloude.

Explicit Tragedia.

Here stinteth the Knight the Monk of his Tale.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE NONNE PRESTES TALE.**The prologue of the Nonne Preestes Tale.**

'Ho!' quod the knight, 'good sir, na-more of this,
 That ye han seyde is right y-nough, y-wis,
 And moche more; for litel hevynesse
 Is right y-nough to moche folk, I gesse.
 I seye for me, it is a greet disese
 Wher-as men han ben in greet welthe and ese,
 To heren of hir sodeyn fal, alas!
 And the contrarie is loie and greet solas,
 As whan a man hath been in povre estaat,
 And clymbeth up, and wexeth fortunat,
 And ther abydeþ in prosperitee,
 Swich thing is gladsom, as it thinketh me,
 And of swich thing were goodly for to telle.'
 'Ye,' quod our hoste, 'by seint Poules belle,
 Ye seye right sooth; this monk, he clappeth loude,
 He spak how "fortune covered with a cloude"
 I noot never what, and als of a "Tragedie"
 Right now ye herde, and parde! no remedie
 It is for to biwaille, ne compleyne
 That that is doon, and als it is a peyne,
 As ye han seyde, to here of hevynesse.
 Sir monk, na-more of this, so god yow blesse!
 Your tale anoyeth al this companye;
 Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye;
 For ther-in is ther no desport ne game.
 Wherfor, sir Monk, or dan Piers by your name,
 I preye yow hertely, telle us somewhat elles,
 For sikerly, nere clinking of your belles,
 That on your brydel hange on every syde,
 By heven king, that for us alle dyde,
 I sholde er this han fallen doun for slepe,
 Although the slough had never been so depe;
 Than had your tale al be told in vayn.
 For certainly, as that thise clerkes seyn,
 "Wher-as a man may have noon audience,
 Noght helpeth it to tellen his sentence."
 And wel I woot the substance is in me,
 If any thing shal wel reported be.
 Sir, sey somewhat of hunting, I yow preye.'
 'Nay,' quod this monk, 'I have no lust to pleye;
 Now let another telle, as I have told.'
 Than spak our host, with rude speche and bold,
 And seyde un-to the Nonnes Preest anon,
 'Com neer, thou preest, com hider, thou sir Iohn,
 Tel us swich thing as may our hertes glade,
 Be blythe, though thou ryde up-on a lade.
 What though thyn hors be bothe foule and lene,
 If he wol serve thee, rekke nat a bene;
 Look that thyn herte be mery evermo.'
 'Yis, sir,' quod he, 'yis, host, so mote I go,
 But I be mery, y-wis, I wol be blamed:'—
 And right anon his tale he hath attamed,

And thus he seyde un-to us everichon,
 This swete preest, this goodly man, sir Iohn.
Explicit.

THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

**Here biginneth the Nonne Preestes Tale of the Cok
 and Hen, Chauntecleer and Pertelote.**

A povre widwe, somdel stope in age,
 Was whylom dwelling in a narwe cotage,
 Bisyde a grove, standing in a dale.
 This widwe, of which I telle yow my tale,
 Sin thilke day that she was last a wyf,
 In pacience ladde a ful simple lyf,
 For litel was hir catel and hir rente;
 By housbondrye, of such as God hir sente,
 She fond hir-self, and eek hir doghtren two.
 Three large sowes hadde she, and namo,
 Three kyn, and eek a sheep that highte Malle.
 Ful sooty was hir bour, and eek hir halle,
 In which she eet ful many a sclendre meel.
 Of poynaunt sauce hir neded never a deel.
 No deyntee morsel passed thurgh hir throte;
 Hir dyete was accordant to hir cote.
 Repleccioun ne made hir never syk;
 Attempree dyete was al hir phisyk,
 And exerceyse, and hertes suffisaunce.
 The goute lette hir no-thing for to daunce,
 Napoplexye shente nat hir heed;
 No wyn ne drank she, neither whyt ne reed;
 Hir bord was served most with whyt and blak,
 Milk and broun breed, in which she fond no lak,
 Seynd bacoun, and somtyme an ey or tweye,
 For she was as it were a maner deye.
 A yerd she hadde, enclosed al aboute
 With stikkes, and a drye dich with-oute,
 In which she hadde a cok, hight Chauntecleer,
 In al the land of crowing nas his peer.
 His vois was merier than the mery orgon
 On messe-dayes that in the chirche gon;
 Wel sikerer was his crowing in his logge,
 Than is a klokke, or an abbey orlogge.
 By nature knew he ech ascencioun
 Of equinoxial in thilke toun;
 For whan degrees fiftene were ascended,
 Thanne crew he, that it mighte nat ben amended.
 His comb was redder than the fyn coral,
 And batailed, as it were a castel-wal.
 His bile was blak, and as the leet it shoon;
 Lyk asur were his legges, and his toon;
 His nayles whytter than the lilie flour,
 And lyk the burned gold was his colour.
 This gentil cok hadde in his governaunce
 Sevene hennes, for to doon al his plesaunce,
 Whiche were his sustres and his paramours,

And wonder lyk to him, as of colours.
Of whiche the faireste hewed on hir throte
Was cleped faire damoysele Pertelote.
Curteys she was, discreet, and debonaire,
And compaignable, and bar hir-self so faire,
Sin thilke day that she was seven night old,
That trewely she hath the herte in hold
Of Chauntecleer loken in every lith;
He loved hir so, that wel was him therwith.
But such a loye was it to here hem singe,
Whan that the brighte sonne gan to springe,
In swete accord, 'my lief is faren in londe.'
For thilke tyme, as I have understonde,
Bestes and briddes coude speke and singe.
And so bifel, that in a daweninge,
As Chauntecleer among his wyves alle
Sat on his perche, that was in the halle,
And next him sat this faire Pertelote,
This Chauntecleer gan gronen in his throte,
As man that in his dreem is drecched sore.
And whan that Pertelote thus herde him rore,
She was agast, and seyde, 'O herte dere,
What eyleth yow, to grone in this manere?
Ye been a verray sleper, fy for shame!'
And he answerde and seyde thus, 'madame,
I pray yow, that ye take it nat a-grief:
By god, me mette I was in swich meschief
Right now, that yet myn herte is sore afright.
Now god,' quod he, 'my swevene recche aright,
And keep my body out of foul prisoun!
Me mette, how that I romed up and doun
Withinne our yerde, wher-as I saugh a beste,
Was lyk an hound, and wolde han maad areste
Upon my body, and wolde han had me deed.
His colour was bitwixe yelwe and reed;
And tipped was his tail, and bothe his eres,
With blak, unlyk the remenant of his heres;
His snowte smal, with glowinge eyen tweye.
Yet of his look for fere almost I deye;
This caused me my groning, doutelees.'
'Avoy!' quod she, 'fy on yow, hertelees!
Allas!' quod she, 'for, by that god above,
Now han ye lost myn herte and al my love;
I can nat love a coward, by my feith.
For certes, what so any womman seith,
We alle desyren, if it mighte be,
To han housbondes hardy, wyse, and free,
And secree, and no nigard, ne no fool,
Ne him that is agast of every tool,
Ne noon avauntour, by that god above!
How dorste ye seyn for shame unto your love,
That any thing mighte make yow aferd?
Have ye no mannes herte, and han a berd?
Allas! and conne ye been agast of swevenis?
No-thing, god wot, but vanitee, in sweven is.

Swevenes engendren of replecciouns,
 And ofte of fume, and of complecciouns,
 Whan humours been to habundant in a wight.
 Certes this dreem, which ye han met to-night,
 Cometh of the grete superfluitee
 Of youre rede *colera*, pardee,
 Which causeth folk to dreden in here dremes
 Of arwes, and of fyr with rede lemes,
 Of grete bestes, that they wol hem byte,
 Of contek, and of whelpes grete and lyte;
 Right as the humour of malencolye
 Causeth ful many a man, in sleep, to crye,
 For fere of blake beres, or boles blake,
 Or elles, blake develes wole hem take.
 Of othere humours coude I telle also,
 That werken many a man in sleep ful wo;
 But I wol passe as lightly as I can.
 Lo Catoun, which that was so wys a man,
 Seyde he nat thus, ne do no fors of dremes?
 Now, sire,' quod she, 'whan we flee fro the bemes,
 For Goddes love, as tak som laxatyf;
 Up peril of my soule, and of my lyf,
 I counseille yow the beste, I wol nat lye,
 That bothe of colere and of malencolye
 Ye purge yow; and for ye shul nat tarie,
 Though in this toun is noon apotecarie,
 I shal my-self to herbes techen yow,
 That shul ben for your hele, and for your prow;
 And in our yerd tho herbes shal I finde,
 The whiche han of hir propretee, by kinde,
 To purgen yow binethe, and eek above.
 Forget not this, for goddes owene love!
 Ye been ful colerik of compleccioun.
 Ware the sonne in his ascencioun
 Ne fynde yow nat repleet of humours hote;
 And if it do, I dar wel leye a grote,
 That ye shul have a fevere terciane,
 Or an agu, that may be youre bane.
 A day or two ye shul have digestyves
 Of wormes, er ye take your laxatyves,
 Of lauriol, centaure, and fumetere,
 Or elles of ellebor, that groweth there,
 Of catapuce, or of gaytres beryis,
 Of erbe yve, growing in our yerd, that mery is;
 Pekke hem up right as they growe, and ete hem in.
 Be mery, housbond, for your fader kin!
 Dredeth no dreem; I can say yow na-more.'
 'Madame,' quod he, '*graunt mercy* of your lore.
 But nathelees, as touching daun Catoun,
 That hath of wisdom such a greet renoun,
 Though that he bad no dremes for to drede,
 By god, men may in olde bokes rede
 Of many a man, more of auctoritee
 Than ever Catoun was, so mote I thee,
 Than al the revers seyn of his sentence,

And han wel founden by experience,
That dremes ben significaciouns,
As wel of Ioye as tribulaciouns
That folk enduren in this lyf present.
Ther nedeth make of this noon argument;
The verray preve sheweth it in dede.
Oon of the gretteste auctours that men rede
Seith thus, that whylom two felawes wente
On pilgrimage, in a ful good entente;
And happed so, thay come into a toun,
Wher-as ther was swich congregacioun
Of peple, and eek so streit of herbergage,
That they ne founde as muche as o cotage,
In which they bothe mighte y-logged be.
Wherfor thay mosten, of necessitee,
As for that night, departen compaignye;
And ech of hem goth to his hostelrye,
And took his logging as it wolde falle.
That oon of hem was logged in a stalle,
Fer in a yerd, with oxen of the plough;
That other man was logged wel y-nough,
As was his aventure, or his fortune,
That us governeth alle as in commune.
And so bifel, that, longe er it were day,
This man mette in his bed, ther-as he lay,
How that his felawe gan up-on him calle,
And seyde, 'allas! for in an oxes stalle
This night I shal be mordred ther I lye.
Now help me, dere brother, er I dye;
In alle haste com to me,' he sayde.
This man out of his sleep for fere abrayde;
But whan that he was wakned of his sleep,
He turned him, and took of this no keep;
Him thoughte his dreem nas but a vanitee.
Thus twyës in his sleping dremed he.
And atte thridde tyme yet his felawe
Cam, as him thoughte, and seide, 'I am now slawe;
Bihold my bloody woundes, depe and wyde!
Arys up erly in the morwe-tyde,
And at the west gate of the toun,' quod he,
'A carte ful of donge ther shaltow see,
In which my body is hid ful prively;
Do thilke carte aresten boldely.
My gold caused my mordre, sooth to sayn;
And tolde him every poynt how he was slayn,
With a ful pitous face, pale of hewe.
And truste wel, his dreem he fond ful trewe;
For on the morwe, as sone as it was day,
To his felawes in he took the way;
And whan that he cam to this oxes stalle,
After his felawe he bigan to calle.
The hostiler answered him anon,
And seyde, 'sire, your felawe is agon,
As sone as day he wente out of the toun.'
This man gan fallen in suspeciou,

Remembring on his dremes that he mette,
 And forth he goth, no lenger wolde he lette,
 Unto the west gate of the toun, and fond
 A dong-carte, as it were to donge lond,
 That was arrayed in the same wyse
 As ye han herd the dede man devyse;
 And with an hardy herte he gan to crye
 Vengeaunce and Iustice of this felonye:—
 'My felawe mordred is this same night,
 And in this carte he lyth gaping upright.
 I crye out on the ministres,' quod he,
 'That sholden kepe and reulen this citee;
 Harrow! allas! her lyth my felawe slayn!'
 What sholde I more un-to this tale sayn?
 The peple out-sterter, and caste the cart to grounde,
 And in the middel of the dong they founde
 The dede man, that mordred was al newe.
 O blisful god, that art so Iust and trewe!
 Lo, how that thou biwreyst mordre alway!
 Mordre wol out, that see we day by day.
 Mordre is so wlatson and abhominable
 To god, that is so Iust and resonable,
 That he ne wol nat suffre it heled be;
 Though it abyde a yeer, or two, or three,
 Mordre wol out, this my conclusioun.
 And right anoon, ministres of that toun
 Han hent the carter, and so sore him pynded,
 And eek the hostiler so sore engyned,
 That thay biknewe hir wikkednesse anoon,
 And were an-hanged by the nekke-boon.
 Here may men seen that dremes been to drede.
 And certes, in the same book I rede,
 Right in the nexte chapitre after this,
 (I gabbe nat, so have I Ioye or blis,)
 Two men that wolde han passed over see,
 For certeyn cause, in-to a fer contree,
 If that the wind ne hadde been contrarie,
 That made hem in a citee for to tarie,
 That stood ful mery upon an haven-syde.
 But on a day, agayn the even-tyde,
 The wind gan chaunge, and blew right as hem leste.
 Iolif and glad they wente un-to hir reste,
 And casten hem ful erly for to saille;
 But to that oo man fil a greet mervaille.
 That oon of hem, in sleping as he lay,
 Him mette a wonder dreem, agayn the day;
 Him thoughte a man stood by his beddes syde,
 And him comaunded, that he sholde abyde,
 And seyde him thus, 'if thou to-morwe wende,
 Thou shalt be dreynt; my tale is at an ende.'
 He wook, and tolde his felawe what he mette,
 And preyde him his viage for to lette;
 As for that day, he preyde him to abyde.
 His felawe, that lay by his beddes syde,
 Gan for to laughe, and scorned him ful faste.

'No dreem,' quod he, 'may so myn herte agaste,
That I wol lette for to do my thinges.
I sette not a straw by thy dreminges,
For swevenes been but vanitees and lapes.
Men dreme al-day of owles or of apes,
And eke of many a mase therewithal;
Men dreme of thing that nevere was ne shal.
But sith I see that thou wolt heer abyde,
And thus for-sleuthen wilfully thy tyde,
God wot it reweth me; and have good day.'
And thus he took his leve, and wente his way.
But er that he hadde halfe his cours y-seyled,
Noot I nat why, ne what mischaunce it eyled,
But casuelly the shippes botme rente,
And ship and man under the water wente
In sighte of othere shippes it byside,
That with hem seyled at the same tyde.
And therfor, faire Pertelote so dere,
By swiche ensamples olde maistow lere,
That no man sholde been to recchelees
Of dremes, for I sey thee, doutelees,
That many a dreem ful sore is for to drede.
Lo, in the lyf of seint Kenelm, I rede,
That was Kenulphus sone, the noble king
Of Mercenrike, how Kenelm mette a thing;
A lyte er he was mordred, on a day,
His mordre in his avisioun he say.
His norice him expounded every del
His sweven, and bad him for to kepe him wel
For traisoun; but he nas but seven yeer old,
And therfore litel tale hath he told
Of any dreem, so holy was his herte.
By god, I hadde lever than my sherte
That ye had rad his legende, as have I.
Dame Pertelote, I sey yow trewely,
Macrobeus, that writ the avisioun
In Affrike of the worthy Cipioun,
Affermeth dremes, and seith that they been
Warning of thinges that men after seen.
And forther-more, I pray yow loketh wel
In the olde testament, of Daniel,
If he held dremes any vanitee.
Reed eek of Ioseph, and ther shul ye see
Wher dremes ben somtyme (I sey nat alle)
Warning of thinges that shul after falle.
Loke of Egipt the king, daun Pharao,
His bakere and his boteler also,
Wher they ne felte noon effect in dremes.
Who-so wol seken actes of sondry remes,
May rede of dremes many a wonder thing.
Lo Cresus, which that was of Lyde king,
Mette he nat that he sat upon a tree,
Which signified he sholde anhangd be?
Lo heer Andromacha, Ectores wyf,
That day that Ector sholde lese his lyf,

She dremed on the same night biforn,
 How that the lyf of Ector sholde be lorn,
 If thilke day he wente in-to bataille;
 She warned him, but it mighte nat availle;
 He wente for to fighte nathelees,
 But he was slayn anoon of Achilles.
 But thilke tale is al to long to telle,
 And eek it is ny day, I may nat dwelle.
 Shortly I seye, as for conclusioun,
 That I shal han of this avisioun
 Adversitee; and I seye forther-more,
 That I ne telle of laxatyves no store,
 For they ben venimous, I woot it wel;
 I hem defye, I love hem never a del.
 Now let us speke of mirth, and stinte al this;
 Madame Pertelote, so have I blis,
 Of o thing god hath sent me large grace;
 For whan I see the beautee of your face,
 Ye ben so scarlet-reed about your yën,
 It maketh al my drede for to dyen;
 For, also siker as *In principio*,
Mulier est hominis confusio;
 Madame, the sentence of this Latin is—
 Womman is mannes Ioye and al his blis.
 For whan I fele a-night your softe syde,
 Al-be-it that I may nat on you ryde,
 For that our perche is maad so narwe, alas!
 I am so ful of Ioye and of solas
 That I defye bothe sweven and dreem.
 And with that word he fley down fro the beem,
 For it was day, and eek his hennas alle;
 And with a chuk he gan hem for to calle,
 For he had founde a corn, lay in the yerd.
 Royal he was, he was namore aferd;
 He fethered Pertelote twenty tyme,
 And trad as ofte, er that it was pryme.
 He loketh as it were a grim leoun;
 And on his toos he rometh up and down,
 Him deynd not to sette his foot to grounde.
 He chukketh, whan he hath a corn y-founde,
 And to him rennen thanne his wyves alle.
 Thus royal, as a prince is in his halle,
 Leve I this Chauntecleer in his pasture;
 And after wol I telle his aventure.
 Whan that the month in which the world bigan,
 That highte March, whan god first maked man,
 Was complet, and [y]-passed were also,
 Sin March bigan, thritty dayes and two,
 Bifel that Chauntecleer, in al his pryde,
 His seven wyves walking by his syde,
 Caste up his eyen to the brighte sonne,
 That in the signe of Taurus hadde y-ronne
 Twenty degrees and oon, and somewhat more;
 And knew by kynde, and by noon other lore,
 That it was pryme, and crew with blisful stevene.

'The sonne,' he sayde, 'is clomben up on hevene
Fourty degrees and oon, and more, y-wis.
Madame Pertelote, my worldes blis,
Herkneth thise blisful briddes how they singe,
And see the fresshe floures how they springe;
Ful is myn herte of revel and solas.'
But sodeinly him fil a sorweful cas;
For ever the latter ende of Ioye is wo.
God woot that worldly Ioye is sone ago;
And if a rethor coude faire endyte,
He in a cronique sauflly mighte it wryte,
As for a sovereyn notabilitee.
Now every wys man, lat him herkne me;
This storie is al-so trewe, I undertake,
As is the book of Launcelot de Lake,
That wommen holde in ful gret reverence.
Now wol I torne agayn to my sentence.
A col-fox, ful of sly iniquitee,
That in the grove hadde woned yeres three,
By heigh imaginacioun forn-cast,
The same night thurgh-out the hegges brast
Into the yerd, ther Chauntecleer the faire
Was wont, and eek his wyves, to repaire;
And in a bed of wortes stille he lay,
Til it was passed undern of the day,
Wayting his tyme on Chauntecleer to falle,
As gladly doon thise homicydes alle,
That in awayt liggen to mordre men.
O false morderer, lurking in thy den!
O neue Scariot, neue Genilon!
False dissimilour, O Greek Sinon,
That broghtest Troye al outrely to sorwe!
O Chauntecleer, acursed be that morwe,
That thou into that yerd flough fro the bemes!
Thou were ful wel y-warned by thy dremes,
That thilke day was perilous to thee.
But what that god forwoot mot nedes be,
After the opinioun of certeyn clerkis.
Witnesse on him, that any perfit clerk is,
That in scole is gret altercacioun
In this matere, and greet disputisoun,
And hath ben of an hundred thousand men.
But I ne can not bulte it to the bren,
As can the holy doctour Augustyn,
Or Boece, or the bishop Bradwardyn,
Whether that goddes worthy forwiting
Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thing,
(Nedely clepe I simple necessitee);
Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
To do that same thing, or do it noght,
Though god forwoot it, er that it was wrought;
Or if his witing streyneth nevere a del
But by necessitee condicionel.
I wol not han to do of swich matere;
My tale is of a cok, as ye may here,

That took his counseil of his wyf, with sorwe,
 To walken in the yerd upon that morwe
 That he had met the dreem, that I yow tolde.
 Wommennes counseils been ful ofte colde;
 Wommannes counseil broghte us first to wo,
 And made Adam fro paradys to go,
 Ther-as he was ful mery, and wel at ese.
 But for I noot, to whom it mighte displese,
 If I counseil of wommen wolde blame,
 Passe over, for I seyde it in my game.
 Rede auctours, wher they trete of swich matere,
 And what thay seyn of wommen ye may here.
 Thise been the cokkes wordes, and nat myne;
 I can noon harm of no womman divyne.
 Faire in the sond, to bathe hir merily,
 Lyth Pertelote, and alle hir sustres by,
 Agayn the sonne; and Chauntecleer so free
 Song merier than the mermayde in the see;
 For Physiologus seith sikerly,
 How that they singen wel and merily.
 And so bifel that, as he caste his yë,
 Among the wortes, on a boterflye,
 He was war of this fox that lay ful lowe.
 No-thing ne liste him thanne for to crowe,
 But cryde anon, 'cok, cok,' and up he sterte,
 As man that was affrayed in his herte.
 For naturelly a beest desyreth flee
 Fro his contrarie, if he may it see,
 Though he never erst had seyn it with his yë.
 This Chauntecleer, whan he gan him espye,
 He wolde han fled, but that the fox anon
 Seyde, 'Gentil sire, allas! wher wol ye gon?
 Be ye affrayed of me that am your freend?
 Now certes, I were worse than a feend,
 If I to yow wolde harm or vileinye.
 I am nat come your counseil for tespye;
 But trewely, the cause of my cominge
 Was only for to herkne how that ye singe.
 For trewely ye have as mery a stevene
 As eny aungel hath, that is in hevene;
 Therwith ye han in musik more felinge
 Than hadde Boece, or any that can singe.
 My lord your fader (god his soule blesse!)
 And eek your moder, of hir gentillesse,
 Han in myn hous y-been, to my gret ese;
 And certes, sire, ful fayn wolde I yow plese.
 But for men speke of singing, I wol saye,
 So mote I brouke wel myn eyen tweye,
 Save yow, I herde never man so singe,
 As dide your fader in the morweninge;
 Certes, it was of herte, al that he song.
 And for to make his voys the more strong,
 He wolde so payne him, that with bothe his yën
 He moste winke, so loude he wolde cryen,
 And stonden on his tiptoon ther-with-al,

And strecche forth his nekke long and smal.
And eek he was of swich discrecioun,
That ther nas no man in no regioun
That him in song or wisdom mighte passe.
I have wel rad in daun Burnel the Asse,
Among his vers, how that ther was a cok,
For that a preestes sone yaf him a knok
Upon his leg, whyl he was yong and nyce,
He made him for to lese his benefyce.
But certeyn, ther nis no comparisoun
Bitwix the wisdom and discrecioun
Of youre fader, and of his subtiltee.
Now singeth, sire, for seinte charitee,
Let see, conne ye your fader countrefete?’
This Chauntecleer his winges gan to bete,
As man that coude his tresoun nat espye,
So was he ravissed with his flaterye.
Allas! ye lordes, many a fals flatour
Is in your courtes, and many a losengeour,
That plesen yow wel more, by my feith,
Than he that soothfastnesse unto yow seith.
Redeth Ecclesiaste of flaterye;
Beth war, ye lordes, of hir trecherye.
This Chauntecleer stood hye up-on his toos,
Strecching his nekke, and heeld his eyen cloos,
And gan to crowe loude for the nones;
And daun Russel the fox sterte up at ones,
And by the gargat hente Chauntecleer,
And on his bak toward the wode him beer,
For yet ne was ther no man that him sewed.
O destinee, that mayst nat been eschewed!
Allas, that Chauntecleer fleigh fro the bemes!
Allas, his wyf ne roghte nat of dremes!
And on a Friday fil al this meschaunce.
O Venus, that art goddesse of plesaunce,
Sin that thy servant was this Chauntecleer,
And in thy service dide al his poweer,
More for delyt, than world to multiplye,
Why woldestow suffre him on thy day to dye?
O Gaufred, dere mayster soverayn,
That, whan thy worthy king Richard was slayn
With shot, compleynedest his deth so sore,
Why ne hadde I now thy sentence and thy lore,
The Friday for to chide, as diden ye?
(For on a Friday soothly slayn was he.)
Than wolde I shewe yow how that I coude pleyne
For Chauntecleres drede, and for his peyne.
Certes, swich cry ne lamentacioun
Was never of ladies maad, whan Ilioun
Was wonne, and Pirrus with his streite swerd,
Whan he hadde hent king Priam by the berd,
And slayn him (as saith us *Eneydos*),
As maden alle the hennes in the clos,
Whan they had seyn of Chauntecleer the sighte.
But sovereynly dame Pertelote shrighthe,

Ful louder than dide Hasdrubales wyf,
 Whan that hir housbond hadde lost his lyf,
 And that the Romainys hadde brend Cartage;
 She was so ful of torment and of rage,
 That wilfully into the fyr she sterte,
 And brende hir-selven with a stedfast herte.
 O woful hennes, right so cryden ye,
 As, whan that Nero brende the citee
 Of Rome, cryden senatoures wyves,
 For that hir housbondes losten alle hir lyves;
 Withouten gilt this Nero hath hem slayn.
 Now wol I torne to my tale agayn:—
 This sely widwe, and eek hir doghtres two,
 Herden thise hennes crye and maken wo,
 And out at dores sterten they anoon,
 And syen the fox toward the grove goon,
 And bar upon his bak the cok away;
 And cryden, 'Out! harrow! and weylaway!
 Ha, ha, the fox!' and after him they ran,
 And eek with staves many another man;
 Ran Colle our dogge, and Talbot, and Gerland,
 And Malkin, with a distaf in hir hand;
 Ran cow and calf, and eek the verray hogges
 So were they fered for berking of the dogges
 And shouting of the men and wimmen eke,
 They ronne so, hem thoughte hir herte breke.
 They yelleden as feendes doon in helle;
 The dokes cryden as men wolde hem quelle;
 The gees for fere flowen over the trees;
 Out of the hyve cam the swarm of bees;
 So hidous was the noyse, a! *benedicite!*
 Certes, he lakke Straw, and his meynee,
 Ne made never shoutes half so shrille,
 Whan that they wolden any Fleming kille,
 As thilke day was maad upon the fox.
 Of bras thay broghten bemes, and of box,
 Of horn, of boon, in whiche they blewe and pouped,
 And therewithal thay shryked and they houped;
 It semed as that heven sholde falle.
 Now, gode men, I pray yow herkneth alle!
 Lo, how fortune turneth sodeinly
 The hope and pryde eek of hir enemy!
 This cok, that lay upon the foxes bak,
 In al his drede, un-to the fox he spak,
 And seyde, 'sire, if that I were as ye,
 Yet sholde I seyn (as wis god helpe me),
 Turneth agayn, ye proude cherles alle!
 A verray pestilence up-on yow falle!
 Now am I come un-to this wodes syde,
 Maugree your heed, the cok shal heer abyde;
 I wol him ete in feith, and that anon.'—
 The fox answerde, 'in feith, it shal be don,'—
 And as he spak that word, al sodeinly
 This cok brak from his mouth deliverly,
 And heighe up-on a tree he fleigh anon.

And whan the fox saugh that he was y-gon,
 'Allas!' quod he, 'O Chauntecleer, alas!
 I have to yow,' quod he, 'y-doon trespass,
 In-as-muche as I maked yow aferd,
 Whan I yow hente, and broghte out of the yerd;
 But, sire, I dide it in no wikke entente;
 Com down, and I shal telle yow what I mente.
 I shal seye sooth to yow, god help me so.'
 'Nay than,' quod he, 'I shrewe us bothe two,
 And first I shrewe my-self, bothe blood and bones,
 If thou bigyle me ofter than ones.
 Thou shalt na-more, thurgh thy flaterye,
 Do me to singe and winke with myn yë.
 For he that winketh, whan he sholde see,
 Al wilfully, god lat him never thee!'
 'Nay,' quod the fox, 'but god yeve him meschaunce,
 That is so undiscreet of governaunce,
 That Iangleth whan he sholde holde his pees.'
 Lo, swich it is for to be recchelees,
 And necligent, and truste on flaterye.
 But ye that holden this tale a folye,
 As of a fox, or of a cok and hen,
 Taketh the moralitee, good men.
 For seint Paul seith, that al that writen is,
 To our doctryne it is y-write, y-wis.
 Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille.
 Now, gode god, if that it be thy wille,
 As seith my lord, so make us alle good men;
 And bringe us to his heighe blisse. Amen.
Here is ended the Nonne Preestes Tale.

EPILOGUE TO THE NONNE PREESTES TALE.

'Sir Nonnes Preest,' our hoste seyde anoon,
 'Y-blessed be thy breche, and every stoon!
 This was a mery tale of Chauntecleer.
 But, by my trouthe, if thou were seculer,
 Thou woldest been a trede-foul a-right.
 For, if thou have corage as thou hast might,
 Thee were nede of hennes, as I wene,
 Ya, mo than seven tymes seventene.
 See, whiche braunes hath this gentil Preest,
 So greet a nekke, and swich a large breest!
 He loketh as a sperhauk with his yën;
 Him nedeth nat his colour for to dyen
 With brasil, ne with greyn of Portingale.
 Now sire, faire falle yow for youre tale!
 And after that he, with ful mery chere,
 Seide to another, as ye shullen here.

THE PHISICIENS TALE.

Here folweth the Phisiciens Tale.

Ther was, as telleth Titus Livius,
 A knight that called was Virginius,
 Fulfild of honour and of worthinesse,

And strong of freendes and of greet richesse.
 This knight a doghter hadde by his wyf,
 No children hadde he mo in al his lyf.
 Fair was this mayde in excellent beautee
 Aboven every wight that man may see;
 For nature hath with sovereyn diligence
 Y-formed hir in so greet excellence,
 As though she wolde seyn, 'lo! I, Nature,
 Thus can I forme and peynte a creature,
 Whan that me list; who can me countrefete?
 Pigmalion noght, though he ay forge and bete,
 Or grave, or peynte; for I dar wel seyn,
 Apelles, Zanzis, sholde werche in veyn,
 Outher to grave or peynte or forge or bete,
 If they presumed me to countrefete.
 For he that is the former principal
 Hath maked me his vicaire general,
 To forme and peynten erthely creaturis
 Right as me list, and ech thing in my cure is
 Under the mone, that may wane and waxe,
 And for my werk right no-thing wol I axe;
 My lord and I ben ful of oon accord;
 I made hir to the worship of my lord.
 So do I alle myne othere creatures,
 What colour that they han, or what figures.'—
 Thus semeth me that Nature wolde seye.
 This mayde of age twelf yeer was and tweye,
 In which that Nature hadde swich delyt.
 For right as she can peynte a lilie whyt
 And reed a rose, right with swich peynture
 She peynted hath this noble creature
 Er she were born, up-on hir limes free,
 Wher-as by right swiche colours sholde be;
 And Phebus dyed hath hir tresses grete
 Lyk to the stremes of his burned hete.
 And if that excellent was hir beautee,
 A thousand-fold more vertuouse was she.
 In hir ne lakked no condicioun,
 That is to preyse, as by discrecioun.
 As wel in goost as body chast was she;
 For which she floured in virginitee
 With alle humilitee and abstinence,
 With alle attemperaunce and pacience,
 With mesure eek of bering and array.
 Discreet she was in answering alway;
 Though she were wys as Pallas, dar I seyn,
 Hir facound eek ful wommanly and pleyn,
 No countrefeted termes hadde she
 To seme wys; but after hir degree
 She spak, and alle hir wordes more and lesse
 Souninge in vertu and in gentillesse.
 Shamfast she was in maydens shamfastnesse,
 Constant in herte, and ever in bisnesse
 To dryve hir out of ydel slogardye.
 Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrye;

For wyn and youthe doon Venus encrece,
As men in fyr wol casten oile or grece.
And of hir owene vertu, unconstreyned,
She hath ful ofte tyme syk hir feyned,
For that she wolde fleen the companye
Wher lykly was to treten of folye,
As is at festes, revels, and at daunces,
That been occasions of daliaunces.
Swich thinges maken children for to be
To sone rype and bold, as men may see,
Which is ful perilous, and hath ben yore.
For al to sone may she lerne lore
Of boldnesse, whan she woxen is a wyf.
And ye maistresses in your olde lyf,
That lordes doghtres han in governaunce,
Ne taketh of my wordes no displeaunce;
Thenketh that ye ben set in governinges
Of lordes doghtres, only for two thinges;
Outher for ye han kept your honestee,
Or elles ye han falle in freletee,
And knowen wel y-nough the olde daunce,
And han forsaken fully swich meschaunce
For evermo; therfore, for Cristes sake,
To teche hem vertu loke that ye ne slake.
A thief of venisoun, that hath forlaft
His likerousnesse, and al his olde craft,
Can kepe a forest best of any man.
Now kepeth hem wel, for if ye wol, ye can;
Loke wel that ye un-to no vice assente,
Lest ye be dampned for your wikke entente;
For who-so doth, a traitour is certeyn.
And taketh kepe of that that I shal seyn;
Of alle tresons sovereyn pestilence
Is whan a wight bitrayseth innocence.
Ye fadres and ye modres eek also,
Though ye han children, be it oon or two,
Your is the charge of al hir surveyaunce,
Whyl that they been under your governaunce.
Beth war that by ensample of your livinge,
Or by your negligence in chastisinge,
That they ne perisse; for I dar wel seye,
If that they doon, ye shul it dere abeye.
Under a shepherde softe and necligent
The wolf hath many a sheep and lamb to-rent.
Suffyseth oon ensample now as here,
For I mot turne agayn to my matere.
This mayde, of which I wol this tale expresse,
So kepte hir-self, hir neded no maistresse;
For in hir living maydens mighten rede,
As in a book, every good word or dede,
That longeth to a mayden vertuous;
She was so prudent and so bountevous.
For which the fame out-sprong on every syde
Bothe of hir beautee and hir bountee wyde;
That thurgh that land they preysed hir echone,

That loved vertu, save envye alone,
 That sory is of other mennes wele,
 And glad is of his sorwe and his unhele;
 (The doctour maketh this descripcioun).
 This mayde up-on a day wente in the toun
 Toward a temple, with hir moder dere,
 As is of yonge maydens the manere.
 Now was ther thanne a Iustice in that toun,
 That governour was of that regioun.
 And so bifel, this Iuge his eyen caste
 Up-on this mayde, avysinge him ful faste,
 As she cam forby ther this Iuge stood.
 Anon his herte chaunged and his mood,
 So was he caught with beautee of this mayde;
 And to him-self ful prively he sayde,
 'This mayde shal be myn, for any man.'
 Anon the feend in-to his herte ran,
 And taughte him sodeynly, that he by slighte
 The mayden to his purpos winne mighte.
 For certes, by no force, ne by no mede,
 Him thoughte, he was nat able for to spede;
 For she was strong of freendes, and eek she
 Confermed was in swich soverayn bountee,
 That wel he wiste he mighte hir never winne
 As for to make hir with hir body sinne.
 For which, by greet deliberacioun,
 He sente after a cherl, was in the toun,
 Which that he knew for subtil and for bold.
 This Iuge un-to this cherl his tale hath told
 In secree wyse, and made him to ensure,
 He sholde telle it to no creature,
 And if he dide, he sholde lese his heed.
 Whan that assented was this cursed reed,
 Glad was this Iuge and maked him greet chere,
 And yaf hym yiftes precieuse and dere.
 Whan shapen was al hir conspiracye
 Fro point to point, how that his lecherye
 Parfourned sholde been ful subtilly,
 As ye shul here it after openly,
 Hoom gooth the cherl, that highte Claudius.
 This false Iuge that highte Apius,
 So was his name, (for this is no fable,
 But knowen for historial thing notable,
 The sentence of it sooth is, out of doute),
 This false Iuge gooth now faste aboute
 To hasten his delyt al that he may.
 And so bifel sone after, on a day,
 This false Iuge, as telleth us the storie,
 As he was wont, sat in his consistorie,
 And yaf his domes up-on sondry cas.
 This false cherl cam forth a ful greet pas,
 And seyde, 'lord, if that it be your wille,
 As dooth me right up-on this pitous bille,
 In which I pleyne up-on Virginius.
 And if that he wol seyn it is nat thus,

I wol it preve, and finde good witesse,
That sooth is that my bille wol expresse.
The Iuge answerde, 'of this, in his absence,
I may nat yeve diffinitif sentence.
Lat do him calle, and I wol gladly here;
Thou shalt have al right, and no wrong here.'
Virginus cam, to wite the Iuges wille,
And right anon was rad this cursed bille;
The sentence of it was as ye shul here.
'To yow, my lord, sire Apius so dere,
Sheweth your povre servant Claudius,
How that a knight, called Virginus,
Agayns the lawe, agayn al equitee,
Holdeth, expres agayn the wil of me,
My servant, which that is my thral by right,
Which fro myn hous was stole up-on a night,
Whyl that she was ful yong; this wol I preve
By witesse, lord, so that it nat yow greve.
She nis his doghter nat, what so he seye;
Wherfore to yow, my lord the Iuge, I preye,
Yeld me my thral, if that it be your wille.'
Lo! this was al the sentence of his bille.
Virginus gan up-on the cherl biholde,
But hastily, er he his tale tolde,
And wolde have preved it, as sholde a knight,
And eek by witnessing of many a wight,
That it was fals that seyde his adversarie,
This cursed Iuge wolde no-thing tarie,
Ne here a word more of Virginus,
But yaf his Iugement, and seyde thus:—
'I deme anon this cherl his servant have;
Thou shalt no lenger in thyn hous hir save.
Go bring hir forth, and put hir in our warde,
The cherl shal have his thral, this I awarde.'
And whan this worthy knight Virginus,
Thurgh sentence of this Iustice Apius,
Moste by force his dere doghter yiven
Un-to the Iuge, in lecherye to liven,
He gooth him hoom, and sette him in his halle,
And leet anon his dere doghter calle,
And, with a face deed as asshen colde,
Upon hir humble face he gan biholde,
With fadres pitee stiking thurgh his herte,
Al wolde he from his purpos nat converte.
'Doghter,' quod he, 'Virginia, by thy name,
Ther been two weyes, outhur deeth or shame,
That thou most suffre; allas! that I was bore!
For never thou deservedest wherfore
To dyen with a swerd or with a knyf.
O dere doghter, ender of my lyf,
Which I have fostred up with swich plesaunce,
That thou were never out of my remembraunce!
O doghter, which that art my laste wo,
And in my lyf my laste Ioye also,
O gemme of chastitee, in pacience

Take thou thy deeth, for this is my sentence.
 For love and nat for hate, thou most be deed;
 My pitous hand mot smyten of thyn heed.
 Allas! that ever Apius thee say!
 Thus hath he falsly Iuged thee to-day' —
 And tolde hir al the cas, as ye bifore
 Han herd; nat nedeth for to telle it more.
 'O mercy, dere fader,' quod this mayde,
 And with that word she both hir armes layde
 About his nekke, as she was wont to do:
 The teres broste out of hir eyen two,
 And seyde, 'gode fader, shal I dye?
 Is ther no grace? is ther no remedye?'
 'No, certes, dere doghter myn,' quod he.
 'Thanne yif me leyser, fader myn,' quod she,
 'My deeth for to compleyne a litel space;
 For pardee, Iepte yaf his doghter grace
 For to compleyne, er he hir slow, allas!
 And god it woot, no-thing was hir trespas,
 But for she ran hir fader first to see,
 To welcome him with greet solempnitee.'
 And with that word she fil aswowne anon,
 And after, whan hir swowning is agon,
 She ryseth up, and to hir fader sayde,
 'Blessed be god, that I shal dye a mayde.
 Yif me my deeth, er that I have a shame;
 Doth with your child your wil, a goddes name!'
 And with that word she preyed him ful ofte,
 That with his swerd he wolde smyte softe,
 And with that word aswowne doun she fil.
 Hir fader, with ful sorweful herte and wil,
 Hir heed of smoot, and by the top it hente,
 And to the Iuge he gan it to presente,
 As he sat yet in doom in consistorie.
 And whan the Iuge it saugh, as seith the storie,
 He bad to take him and anhangen him faste.
 But right anon a thousand peple in thraste,
 To save the knight, for routhe and for pitee,
 For knowen was the false iniquitee.
 The peple anon hath suspect of this thing,
 By manere of the cherles chalanging,
 That it was by the assent of Apius;
 They wisten wel that he was lecherous.
 For which un-to this Apius they gon,
 And caste him in a prison right anon,
 Wher-as he slow him-self; and Claudius,
 That servant was un-to this Apius,
 Was demed for to hange upon a tree;
 But that Virginius, of his pitee,
 So preyde for him that he was exyled;
 And elles, certes, he had been bigyled.
 The remenant were anhangen, more and lesse,
 That were consentant of this cursednesse.—
 Heer men may seen how sinne hath his meryte!
 Beth war, for no man woot whom god wol smyte

In no degree, ne in which maner wyse
 The worm of conscience may agryse
 Of wikked lyf, though it so privee be,
 That no man woot ther-of but god and he.
 For be he lewed man, or elles lered,
 He noot how sone that he shal been afered.
 Therfore I rede yow this conseil take,
 Forsaketh sinne, er sinne yow forsake.

Here endeth the Phisiciens tale.

WORDS OF THE HOST.

The wordes of the Host to the Phisicien and the Pardoner.

Our Hoste gan to swere as he were wood,
 'Harrow!' quod he, 'by nayles and by blood!.
 This was a fals cherl and a fals lustyse!
 As shamful deeth as herte may devyse
 Come to thise Iuges and hir advocats!
 Algate this sely mayde is slayn, alas!
 Allas! to dere boghte she beautee!
 Wherfore I seye al day, as men may see,
 That yiftes of fortune or of nature
 Ben cause of deeth to many a creature.
 Hir beautee was hir deeth, I dar wel sayn;
 Allas! so pitously as she was slayn!
 Of bothe yiftes that I speke of now
 Men han ful ofte more harm than prow.
 But trewely, myn owene mayster dere,
 This is a pitous tale for to here.
 But natheles, passe over, is no fors;
 I prey to god, so save thy gentil cors,
 And eek thyne urinals and thy Iordanes,
 Thyn Ypocras, and eek thy Galianes,
 And every boist ful of thy letuarie;
 God blesse hem, and our lady seinte Marie!
 So mot I theen, thou art a propre man,
 And lyk a prelat, by saint Ronyan!
 Seyde I nat wel? I can nat speke in terme;
 But wel I woot, thou doost my herte to erme,
 That I almost have caught a cardiacle.
 By corpus bones! but I have triacle,
 Or elles a draught of moyste and corny ale,
 Or but I here anon a mery tale,
 Myn herte is lost for pitee of this mayde.
 Thou bel amy, thou Pardoner,' he seyde,
 'Tel us som mirthe or Iapes right anon.'
 'It shall be doon,' quod he, 'by saint Ronyon!
 But first,' quod he, 'heer at this ale-stake
 I wol both drinke, and eten of a cake.'
 But right anon thise gentils gonne to crye,
 'Nay! lat him telle us of no ribaudye;
 Tel us som moral thing, that we may lere
 Som wit, and thanne wol we gladly here.'
 'I graunte, y-wis,' quod he, 'but I mot thinke
 Up-on som honest thing, whyl that I drinke.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE PARDONERS TALE.

Here folweth the Prologe of the Pardoners Tale.

Radix malorum est Cupiditas: Ad Thimotheum, sexto.

'Lordings,' quod he, 'in chirches whan I preche,
I peyne me to han an hauteyn speche,
And ringe it out as round as gooth a belle,
For I can al by rote that I telle.

My theme is alwey oon, and ever was—

"Radix malorum est Cupiditas."

First I pronounce whennes that I come,
And than my bulles shewe I, alle and somme.

Our lige lordes seel on my patente,
That shewe I first, my body to warente,
That no man be so bold, ne preest ne clerk,
Me to destourbe of Cristes holy werk;
And after that than telle I forth my tales,
Bulles of popes and of cardinales,
Of patriarkes, and bishoppes I shewe;
And in Latyn I speke a wordes fewe,
To saffron with my predicacioun,
And for to stire men to devocioun.

Than shewe I forth my longe cristal stones,
Y-crammed ful of cloutes and of bones;
Reliks been they, as wenen they echoon.

Than have I in latoun a sholder-boon
Which that was of an holy Iewes shepe.
"Good men," seye I, "tak of my wordes kepe;
If that this boon be wasshe in any welle,
If cow, or calf, or sheep, or oxe swelle
That any worm hath ete, or worm y-stonge,
Tak water of that welle, and wash his tonge,
And it is hool anon; and forthermore,
Of pokkes and of scabbe, and every sore
Shal every sheep be hool, that of this welle
Drinketh a draughte; tak kepe eek what I telle.

If that the good-man, that the bestes oweth,
Wol every wike, er that the cok him croweth,
Fastinge, drinken of this welle a draughte,
As thilke holy Iewe our eldres taughte,
His bestes and his stoor shal multiplye.

And, sirs, also it heleth Ialousye;
For, though a man be falle in Ialous rage,
Let maken with this water his potage,
And never shal he more his wyf mistriste,
Though he the sooth of hir defaute wiste;
Al had she taken preestes two or three.

Heer is a miteyn eek, that ye may see.
He that his hond wol putte in this miteyn,
He shal have multiplying of his greyn,
Whan he hath sowen, be it whete or otes,
So that he offre pens, or elles grotes.
Good men and wommen, o thing warne I yow,
If any wight be in this chirche now,
That hath doon sinne horrible, that he

Dar nat, for shame, of it y-shriven be,
 Or any womman, be she yong or old,
 That hath y-maad hir housbond cokewold,
 Swich folk shul have no power ne no grace
 To offren to my reliks in this place.
 And who-so findeth him out of swich blame,
 He wol com up and offre in goddes name,
 And I assoille him by the auctoritee
 Which that by bulle y-graunted was to me."
 By this gaude have I wonne, yeer by yeer,
 An hundred mark sith I was Pardoner.
 I stonde lyk a clerk in my pulpet,
 And whan the lewed peple is doun y-set,
 I preche, so as ye han herd bifore,
 And telle an hundred false Iapes more.
 Than peyne I me to strecche forth the nekke,
 And est and west upon the peple I bekke,
 As doth a dowve sitting on a berne.
 Myn hondes and my tonge goon so yerne,
 That it is Ioye to see my bisinesse.
 Of avaryce and of swich cursednesse
 Is al my preching, for to make hem free
 To yeve her pens, and namely un-to me.
 For my entente is nat but for to winne,
 And no-thing for correccioun of sinne.
 I rekke never, whan that they ben beried,
 Though that her soules goon a-blakeberied!
 For certes, many a predicacioun
 Comth ofte tyme of yvel entencioun;
 Som for plesaunce of folk and flaterye,
 To been avaunced by ipocrisyse,
 And som for veyne glorie, and som for hate.
 For, whan I dar non other weyes debate,
 Than wol I stinge him with my tonge smerte
 In preching, so that he shal nat asterte
 To been defamed falsly, if that he
 Hath trespassed to my brethren or to me.
 For, though I telle noght his propre name,
 Men shal wel knowe that it is the same
 By signes and by othere circumstances.
 Thus quyte I folk that doon us displesances;
 Thus spitte I out my venim under hewe
 Of holynesse, to seme holy and trewe.
 But shortly myn entente I wol devyse;
 I preche of no-thing but for coveityse.
 Therfor my theme is yet, and ever was—
 "*Radix malorum est cupiditas.*"
 Thus can I preche agayn that same vyce
 Which that I use, and that is avaryce.
 But, though my-self be gilty in that sinne,
 Yet can I maken other folk to twinne
 From avaryce, and sore to repente.
 But that is nat my principal entente.
 I preche no-thing but for coveityse;
 Of this matere it oughte y-nogh suffyse.

Than telle I hem ensamples many oon
 Of olde stories, longe tyme agoon:
 For lewed peple loven tales olde;
 Swich thinges can they wel reporte and holde.
 What? trowe ye, the whyles I may preche,
 And winne gold and silver for I teche,
 That I wol live in povert wilfully?
 Nay, nay, I thoghte it never trewely!
 For I wol preche and begge in sondry londes;
 I wol not do no labour with myn hondes,
 Ne make baskettes, and live therby,
 Because I wol nat beggen ydelly.
 I wol non of the apostles counterfete;
 I wol have money, wolle, chese, and whete,
 Al were it yeven of the povrest page,
 Or of the povrest widwe in a village,
 Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne.
 Nay! I wol drinke licour of the vyne,
 And have a Ioly wenche in every toun.
 But herkneth, lordings, in conclusioun;
 Your lyking is that I shal telle a tale.
 Now, have I dronke a draughte of corny ale,
 By god, I hope I shal yow telle a thing
 That shal, by resoun, been at your lyking.
 For, though myself be a ful vicious man,
 A moral tale yet I yow telle can,
 Which I am wont to preche, for to winne.
 Now holde your pees, my tale I wol beginne.

THE PARDONERS TALE.

Here biginneth the Pardoners Tale.

In Flaundres whylom was a companye
 Of yonge folk, that haunteden folye,
 As ryot, hasard, stewes, and tavernes,
 Wher-as, with harpes, lutes, and giternes,
 They daunce and pleye at dees bothe day and night,
 And ete also and drinken over hir might,
 Thurgh which they doon the devel sacrifice
 With-in that develes temple, in cursed wyse,
 By superfluitee abhominable;
 Hir othes been so grete and so dampnable,
 That it is grisly for to here hem swere;
 Our blissed lordes body they to-tere;
 Hem thoughte Lewes rente him noght y-nough;
 And ech of hem at otheres sinne lough.
 And right anon than comen tombesteres
 Fetys and smale, and yonge fruyteteres,
 Singers with harpes, baudes, wafereres,
 Whiche been the verray develes officeres
 To kindle and blowe the fyr of lecherye,
 That is annexed un-to glotonye;
 The holy writ take I to my witnesse,
 That luxurie is in wyn and dronkenesse.
 Lo, how that dronken Loth, unkindely,

Lay by his doghtres two, unwittingly;
So dronke he was, he niste what he wroghte.
Herodes, (who-so wel the stories soghte),
Whan he of wyn was replet at his feste,
Right at his owene table he yaf his heste
To sleen the Baptist Iohn ful giltelees.
Senek seith eek a good word doutelees;
He seith, he can no difference finde
Bitwix a man that is out of his minde
And a man which that is dronkelewe,
But that woodnesse, y-fallen in a shrewe,
Persevereth lenger than doth drunkenesse.
O glotonye, ful of cursednesse,
O cause first of our confusioun,
O original of our dampnacioun,
Til Crist had boght us with his blood agayn!
Lo, how dere, shortly for to sayn,
Aboght was thilke cursed vileinye;
Corrupt was al this world for glotonye!
Adam our fader, and his wyf also,
Fro Paradys to labour and to wo
Were driven for that vyce, it is no drede;
For whyl that Adam fasted, as I rede,
He was in Paradys; and whan that he
Eet of the fruyt defended on the tree,
Anon he was out-cast to wo and peyne.
O glotonye, on thee wel oghte us pleyne!
O, wiste a man how many maladyes
Folwen of excesse and of glotonyes,
He wolde been the more mesurable
Of his diete, sittinge at his table.
Allas! the shorte throte, the tendre mouth,
Maketh that, Est and West, and North and South,
In erthe, in eir, in water men to-swinke
To gete a glotoun deyntee mete and drinke!
Of this matere, o Paul, wel canstow trete,
'Mete un-to wombe, and wombe eek un-to mete,
Shal god destroyen bothe,' as Paulus seith.
Allas! a foul thing is it, by my feith,
To seye this word, and fouler is the dede,
Whan man so drinketh of the whyte and rede,
That of his throte he maketh his privee,
Thurgh thilke cursed superfluitee.
The apostel weping seith ful pitously,
'Ther walken many of whiche yow told have I,
I seye it now weping with pitous voys,
That they been enemys of Cristes croys,
Of whiche the ende is deeth, wombe is her god.'
O wombe! O bely! O stinking cod,
Fulfilde of donge and of corrupcioun!
At either ende of thee foul is the soun.
How greet labour and cost is thee to finde!
Thise cokes, how they stampe, and streyne, and grinde,
And turnen substaunce in-to accident,
To fulfille al thy likerous talent!

Out of the harde bones knokke they
 The mary, for they caste noght a-wey
 That may go thurgh the golet softe and swote;
 Of spicerye, of leef, and bark, and rote
 Shal been his sauce y-maked by delyt,
 To make him yet a newer appetyt.
 But certes, he that haunteth swich delyces
 Is deed, whyl that he liveth in tho vyces.
 A lecherous thing is wyn, and dronkenesse
 Is ful of stryving and of wrecchednesse.
 O dronke man, disfigured is thy face,
 Sour is thy breeth, foul artow to embrace,
 And thurgh thy dronke nose semeth the soun
 As though thou seydest ay 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun';
 And yet, god wot, Sampsoun drank never no wyn.
 Thou fallest, as it were a stiked swyn;
 Thy tonge is lost, and al thyn honest cure;
 For dronkenesse is verray sepulture
 Of mannes wit and his discrecioun.
 In whom that drinke hath dominacioun,
 He can no conseil kepe, it is no drede.
 Now kepe yow fro the whyte and fro the rede,
 And namely fro the whyte wyn of Lepe,
 That is to selle in Fish-strete or in Chepe.
 This wyn of Spayne crepeth subtilly
 In othere wynes, growing faste by,
 Of which ther ryseth swich fumositee,
 That whan a man hath dronken draughtes three,
 And weneth that he be at hoom in Chepe,
 He is in Spayne, right at the toun of Lepe,
 Nat at the Rochel, ne at Burdeux toun;
 And thanne wol he seye, 'Sampsoun, Sampsoun.'
 But herkneth, lordings, o word, I yow preye,
 That alle the sovereyn actes, dar I seye,
 Of victories in the olde testament,
 Thurgh verray god, that is omnipotent,
 Were doon in abstinence and in preyere;
 Loketh the Bible, and ther ye may it lere.
 Loke, Attila, the grete conquerour,
 Deyde in his sleep, with shame and dishonour,
 Bledinge ay at his nose in dronkenesse;
 A capitayn shoulde live in sobrenesse.
 And over al this, avyseth yow right wel
 What was comaunded un-to Lamuel—
 Nat Samuel, but Lamuel, seye I—
 Redeth the Bible, and finde it expresly
 Of wyn-yeving to hem that han Iustyse.
 Na-more of this, for it may wel suffyse.
 And now that I have spoke of glotonye,
 Now wol I yow defenden hasardrye.
 Hasard is verray moder of lesinges,
 And of deceite, and cursed forsweringes,
 Blaspheme of Crist, manslaughter, and wast also
 Of catel and of tyme; and forthermo,
 It is repreve and contrarie of honour

For to ben holde a commune hasardour.
And ever the hyër he is of estaat,
The more is he holden desolaat.
If that a prince useth hasardrye,
In alle governaunce and policye
He is, as by commune opinoun,
Y-holde the lasse in reputacioun.
Stilbon, that was a wys embassadour,
Was sent to Corinthe, in ful greet honour,
Fro Lacidomie, to make hir alliaunce.
And whan he cam, him happede, par chaunce,
That alle the grettest that were of that lond,
Pleyinge atte hasard he hem fond.
For which, as sone as it mighte be,
He stal him hoom agayn to his contree,
And seyde, 'ther wol I nat lese my name;
Ne I wol nat take on me so greet defame,
Yow for to allye un-to none hasardours.
Sendeth othere wyse embassadours;
For, by my trouthe, me were lever dye,
Than I yow sholde to hasardours allye.
For ye that been so glorious in honours
Shul nat allyen yow with hasardours
As by my wil, ne as by my tretee.'
This wyse philosophre thus seyde he.
Loke eek that, to the king Demetrius
The king of Parthes, as the book seith us,
Sente him a paire of dees of gold in scorn,
For he hadde used hasard ther-biforn;
For which he heeld his glorie or his renoun
At no value or reputacioun.
Lordes may finden other maner pley
Honeste y-nough to dryve the day away.
Now wol I speke of othes false and grete
A word or two, as olde bokes trete.
Gret swering is a thing abhominable,
And false swering is yet more reprevable.
The heighe god forbad swering at al,
Witnesse on Mathew; but in special
Of swering seith the holy Ieremye,
'Thou shalt seye sooth thyn othes, and nat lye,
And swere in dome, and eek in rightwisnesse;'
But ydel swering is a cursednesse.
Bihold and see, that in the firste table
Of heighe goddes hestes honorable,
How that the seconde heste of him is this—
'Tak nat my name in ydel or amis.'
Lo, rather he forbedeth swich swering
Than homicyde or many a cursed thing;
I seye that, as by ordre, thus it stondeth;
This knowen, that his hestes understondeth,
How that the second heste of god is that.
And forther over, I wol thee telle al plat,
That vengeance shal nat parten from his hous,
That of his othes is to outrageous.

'By goddes precious herte, and by his nayles,
 And by the blode of Crist, that it is in Hayles,
 Seven is my chaunce, and thyn is cink and treye;
 By goddes armes, if thou falsly pleye,
 This dagger shal thurgh-out thyn herte go'—
 This fruyt cometh of the bicched bones two,
 Forswering, ire, falsnesse, homicyde.
 Now, for the love of Crist that for us dyde,
 Leveth your othes, bothe grete and smale;
 But, sirs, now wol I telle forth my tale.
 Thise ryotoures three, of whiche I telle,
 Longe erst er pryme rong of any belle,
 Were set hem in a taverne for to drinke;
 And as they satte, they herde a belle clinke
 Biforn a cors, was caried to his grave;
 That oon of hem gan callen to his knave,
 'Go bet,' quod he, 'and axe redily,
 What cors is this that passeth heer forby;
 And look that thou reporte his name wel.'
 'Sir,' quod this boy, 'it nedeth never-a-del.
 It was me told, er ye cam heer, two houres;
 He was, pardee, an old felawe of youres;
 And sodeynly he was y-slayn to-night,
 For-dronke, as he sat on his bench upright;
 Ther cam a privee thief, men clepeth Deeth,
 That in this contree al the peple sleeth,
 And with his spere he smoot his herte a-two,
 And wente his wey with-outen wordes mo.
 He hath a thousand slayn this pestilence:
 And, maister, er ye come in his presence,
 Me thinketh that it were necessarie
 For to be war of swich an adversarie:
 Beth redy for to mete him evermore.
 Thus taughte me my dame, I sey na-more.'
 'By seinte Marie,' seyde this taverner,
 'The child seith sooth, for he hath slayn this yeer,
 Henne over a myle, with-in a greet village,
 Both man and womman, child and hyne, and page.
 I trowe his habitacioun be there;
 To been avysed greet wisdom it were,
 Er that he dide a man a dishonour.'
 'Ye, goddes armes,' quod this ryotour,
 'Is it swich peril with him for to mete?
 I shal him seke by wey and eek by strete,
 I make avow to goddes digne bones!
 Herkneth, felawes, we three been al ones;
 Lat ech of us holde up his hond til other,
 And ech of us bicomen otheres brother,
 And we wol sleen this false traytour Deeth;
 He shal be slayn, which that so many sleeth,
 By goddes dignitee, er it be night.'
 Togidres han thise three her trouthes plight,
 To live and dyen ech of hem for other,
 As though he were his owene y-boren brother.
 And up they sterte al dronken, in this rage,

And forth they goon towardes that village,
Of which the taverner had spoke biforn,
And many a grisly ooth than han they sworn,
And Cristes blessed body they to-rente—
'Deeth shal be deed, if that they may him hente.'
Whan they han goon nat fully half a myle,
Right as they wolde han troden over a style,
An old man and a povre with hem mette.
This olde man ful mekely hem grette,
And seyde thus, 'now, lordes, god yow see!'
The proudest of thise ryotoures three
Answerde agayn, 'what? carl, with sory grace,
Why artow al forwrapped save thy face?
Why livestow so longe in so greet age?'
This olde man gan loke in his visage,
And seyde thus, 'for I ne can nat finde
A man, though that I walked in-to Inde,
Neither in citee nor in no village,
That wolde chaunge his youthe for myn age;
And therfore moot I han myn age stille,
As longe time as it is goddes wille.
Ne deeth, allas! ne wol nat han my lyf;
Thus walke I, lyk a resteleees caityf,
And on the ground, which is my modres gate,
I knokke with my staf, bothe erly and late,
And seye, "leve moder, leet me in!
Lo, how I vanish, flesh, and blood, and skin!
Allas! whan shul my bones been at reste?
Moder, with yow wolde I chaunge my cheste,
That in my chambre longe tyme hath be,
Ye! for an heyre clout to wrappe me!"
But yet to me she wol nat do that grace,
For which ful pale and welked is my face.
But, sirs, to yow it is no curteisye
To speken to an old man vileinye,
But he trespassse in worde, or elles in dede.
In holy writ ye may your-self wel rede,
"Agayns an old man, hoor upon his heed,
Ye sholde aryse;" wherfor I yeve yow reed,
Ne dooth un-to an old man noon harm now,
Na-more than ye wolde men dide to yow
In age, if that ye so longe abyde;
And god be with yow, wher ye go or ryde.
I moot go thider as I have to go.'
'Nay, olde cherl, by god, thou shalt nat so,'
Seyde this other hasardour anon;
'Thou partest nat so lightly, by saint Iohn!
Thou spak right now of thilke traitour Deeth,
That in this contree alle our frendes sleeth.
Have heer my trouthe, as thou art his aspye,
Tel wher he is, or thou shalt it abyde,
By god, and by the holy sacrament!
For soothly thou art oon of his assent,
To sleen us yonge folk, thou false theef!'
'Now, sirs,' quod he, 'if that yow be so leef

To finde Deeth, turne up this croked wey,
 For in that grove I lafte him, by my fey,
 Under a tree, and ther he wol abyde;
 Nat for your boost he wol him no-thing hyde.
 See ye that ook? right ther ye shul him finde.
 God save yow, that boghte agayn mankinde,
 And yow amende!’—thus seyde this olde man.
 And everich of thise ryotoures ran,
 Til he cam to that tree, and ther they founde
 Of florins fyne of golde y-coyned rounde
 Wel ny an eighte bussshels, as hem thoughte.
 No lenger thanne after Deeth they soughte,
 But ech of hem so glad was of that sighte,
 For that the florins been so faire and brighte,
 That down they sette hem by this precious hord.
 The worste of hem he spake the firste word.
 ‘Brethren,’ quod he, ‘tak kepe what I seye;
 My wit is greet, though that I bourde and pleye.
 This tresor hath fortune un-to us yiven,
 In mirthe and Iolitee our lyf to liven,
 And lightly as it comth, so wol we spende.
 Ey! goddes precious dignitee! who wende
 To-day, that we sholde han so fair a grace?
 But mighte this gold be caried fro this place
 Hoom to myn hous, or elles un-to youre—
 For wel ye woot that al this gold is oures—
 Than were we in heigh felicitee.
 But trewely, by daye it may nat be;
 Men wolde seyn that we were theves stronge,
 And for our owene tresor doon us honge.
 This tresor moste y-caried be by nighte
 As wysly and as slyly as it mighte.
 Wherfore I rede that cut among us alle
 Be drawe, and lat se wher the cut wol falle;
 And he that hath the cut with herte blythe
 Shal renne to the toun, and that ful swythe,
 And bringe us breed and wyn ful prively.
 And two of us shul kepen subtilly
 This tresor wel; and, if he wol nat tarie,
 Whan it is night, we wol this tresor carie
 By oon assent, wher-as us thinketh best.’
 That oon of hem the cut broughte in his fest,
 And bad hem drawe, and loke wher it wol falle;
 And it fil on the yongeste of hem alle;
 And forth toward the toun he wente anon.
 And al-so sone as that he was gon,
 That oon of hem spak thus un-to that other,
 ‘Thou knowest wel thou art my sworne brother,
 Thy profit wol I telle thee anon.
 Thou woost wel that our felawe is agon;
 And heer is gold, and that ful greet plentee,
 That shal departed been among us three.
 But natheles, if I can shape it so
 That it departed were among us two,
 Hadde I nat doon a freendes torn to thee?’

That other answerde, 'I noot how that may be;
He woot how that the gold is with us tweye,
What shal we doon, what shal we to him seye?'
'Shal it be conseil?' seyde the firste shrewe,
'And I shal tellen thee, in wordes fewe,
What we shal doon, and bringe it wel aboute.'
'I graunte,' quod that other, 'out of doute,
That, by my trouthe, I wol thee nat biwreye.'
'Now,' quod the firste, 'thou woost wel we be tweye,
And two of us shul strenger be than oon.
Look whan that he is set, and right anoon
Arys, as though thou woldest with him pleye;
And I shal ryve him thurgh the sydes tweye
Whyl that thou strogelest with him as in game,
And with thy dagger look thou do the same;
And than shal al this gold departed be,
My dere freend, bitwixen me and thee;
Than may we bothe our lustes al fulfille,
And pleye at dees right at our owene wille.'
And thus acorded been thise shrewes tweye
To sleen the thridde, as ye han herd me seye.
This yongest, which that wente un-to the toun,
Ful ofte in herte he rolleth up and down
The beautee of thise florins newe and brighte.
'O lord!' quod he, 'if so were that I mighte
Have al this tresor to my-self allone,
Ther is no man that liveth under the trone
Of god, that sholde live so mery as I!'
And atte laste the feend, our enemy,
Putte in his thought that he shold poyson beye,
With which he mighte sleen his felawes tweye;
For-why the feend fond him in swich lyvinge,
That he had leve him to sorwe bringe,
For this was outrely his fulle entente
To sleen hem bothe, and never to repente.
And forth he gooth, no lenger wolde he tarie,
Into the toun, un-to a pothecarie,
And preyed him, that he him wolde selle
Som poyson, that he mighte his rattes quelle;
And eek ther was a polcat in his hawe,
That, as he seyde, his capouns hadde y-slawe,
And fayn he wolde wreke him, if he mighte,
On vermin, that destroyed him by nighte.
The pothecarie answerde, 'and thou shalt have
A thing that, al-so god my soule save,
In al this world ther nis no creature,
That ete or dronke hath of this confiture
Noght but the mountance of a corn of whete,
That he ne shal his lyf anon forlete;
Ye, sterve he shal, and that in lasse whyle
Than thou wolt goon a paas nat but a myle;
This poyson is so strong and violent.'
This cursed man hath in his hond y-hent
This poyson in a box, and sith he ran
In-to the nexte strete, un-to a man,

And borwed [of] him large botels three;
 And in the two his poyson poured he;
 The thridde he kepte clene for his drinke.
 For al the night he shoop him for to swinke
 In caryinge of the gold out of that place.
 And whan this ryotour, with sory grace,
 Had filled with wyn his grete botels three,
 To his felawes agayn repaireth he.
 What nedeth it to sermone of it more?
 For right as they had cast his deeth bifore,
 Right so they han him slayn, and that anon.
 And whan that this was doon, thus spak that oon,
 'Now lat us sitte and drinke, and make us merie,
 And afterward we wol his body berie.'
 And with that word it happed him, par cas,
 To take the botel ther the poyson was,
 And drank, and yaf his felawe drinke also,
 For which anon they storven bothe two.
 But, certes, I suppose that Avicen
 Wroot never in no canon, ne in no fen,
 Mo wonder signes of empoisoning
 Than hadde thise wrecches two, er hir ending.
 Thus ended been thise homicydes two,
 And eek the false empoysoner also.
 O cursed sinne, ful of cursednesse!
 O traytours homicyde, o wikkednesse!
 O glotonye, luxurie, and hasardrye!
 Thou blasphemour of Crist with vileinye
 And othes grete, of usage and of pryde!
 Allas! mankinde, how may it bityde,
 That to thy creatour which that thee wroghte,
 And with his precious herte-blood thee boghte,
 Thou art so fals and so unkinde, allas!
 Now, goode men, god forgeve yow your trespas,
 And ware yow fro the sinne of avaryce.
 Myn holy pardoun may yow alle waryce,
 So that ye offre nobles or sterlinges,
 Or elles silver broches, spones, ringes.
 Boweth your heed under this holy bulle!
 Cometh up, ye wyves, offreth of your wolle!
 Your name I entre heer in my rolle anon;
 In-to the blisse of hevene shul ye gon;
 I yow assoile, by myn heigh power,
 Yow that wol offre, as clene and eek as cleer
 As ye were born; and, lo, sirs, thus I preche.
 And Iesu Crist, that is our soules leche,
 So graunte yow his pardon to receyve;
 For that is best; I wol yow nat deceyve.
 But sirs, o word forgat I in my tale,
 I have relikes and pardon in my male,
 As faire as any man in Engelond,
 Whiche were me yeven by the popes hond.
 If any of yow wol, of devocioun,
 Offren, and han myn absolucioun,
 Cometh forth anon, and kneleth heer adoun,

And mekely receyveth my pardoun:
 Or elles, taketh pardon as ye wende,
 Al newe and fresh, at every tounes ende,
 So that ye offren alwey newe and newe
 Nobles and pens, which that be gode and trewe.
 It is an honour to everich that is heer,
 That ye mowe have a suffisant pardoneer
 Tassoille yow, in contree as ye ryde,
 For adventures which that may bityde.
 Peraventure ther may falle oon or two
 Doun of his hors, and breke his nekke atwo.
 Look which a seuretee is it to yow alle
 That I am in your felaweship y-falle,
 That may assoille yow, bothe more and lasse,
 Whan that the soule shal fro the body passe,
 I rede that our hoste heer shal biginne,
 For he is most enveloped in sinne.
 Com forth, sir hoste, and offre first anon,
 And thou shalt kisse the reliks everichon,
 Ye, for a grote! unbokel anon thy purs.'
 'Nay, nay,' quod he, 'than have I Cristes curs!
 Lat be,' quod he, 'it shal nat be, so theech!
 Thou woldest make me kisse thyn old breech,
 And swere it were a relik of a seint,
 Thogh it were with thy fundement depeint!
 But by the croys which that seint Eleyne fond,
 I wolde I hadde thy coillons in myn hond
 In stede of relikes or of seintuarie;
 Lat cutte hem of, I wol thee helpe hem carie;
 Thay shul be shryned in an hogges tord.'
 This pardoner answerde nat a word;
 So wrooth he was, no word ne wolde he seye.
 'Now,' quod our host, 'I wol no lenger pleye
 With thee, ne with noon other angry man.'
 But right anon the worthy knight bigan,
 Whan that he saugh that al the peple lough,
 'Na-more of this, for it is right y-nough;
 Sir pardoner, be glad and mery of chere;
 And ye, sir host, that been to me so dere,
 I prey yow that ye kisse the pardoner.
 And pardoner, I prey thee, drawe thee neer,
 And, as we diden, lat us laughe and pleye.'
 Anon they kiste, and riden forth hir weye.
Here is ended the Pardoners Tale.

THE WIFE OF BATH'S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe.
 'Experience, though noon auctoritee
 Were in this world, were right y-nough to me
 To speke of wo that is in mariage;
 For, lordinges, sith I twelf yeer was of age,
 Thonked be god that is eterne on lyve,
 Housbondes at chirche-dore I have had fyve;
 For I so ofte have y-wedded be;

And alle were worthy men in hir degree.
 But me was told certeyn, nat longe agon is,
 That sith that Crist ne wente never but onis
 To wedding in the Cane of Galilee,
 That by the same ensample taughte he me
 That I ne sholde wedded be but ones.
 Herke eek, lo! which a sharp word for the nones
 Besyde a welle Iesus, god and man,
 Spak in repreve of the Samaritan:
 "Thou hast y-had fyve housbondes," quod he,
 "And thilke man, the which that hath now thee,
 Is noght thyn housbond;" thus seyde he certeyn;
 What that he mente ther-by, I can nat seyn;
 But that I axe, why that the fifthe man
 Was noon housbond to the Samaritan?
 How manye mighte she have in mariage?
 Yet herde I never tellen in myn age
 Upon this nombre diffinicioun;
 Men may devyne and glosen up and doun.
 But wel I woot expres, with-oute lye,
 God bad us for to wexe and multiplye;
 That gentil text can I wel understonde.
 Eek wel I woot he seyde, myn housbonde
 Sholde lete fader and moder, and take me;
 But of no nombre mencioun made he,
 Of bigamye or of octogamye;
 Why sholde men speke of it vileinye?
 Lo, here the wyse king, dan Salomon;
 I trowe he hadde wyves mo than oon;
 As, wolde god, it leveful were to me
 To be refresshed half so ofte as he!
 Which yifte of god hadde he for alle his wyvis!
 No man hath swich, that in this world alyve is.
 God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,
 The firste night had many a mery fit
 With ech of hem, so wel was him on lyve!
 Blessed be god that I have wedded fyve!
 Welcome the sixte, whan that ever he shal.
 For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chast in al;
 Whan myn housbond is fro the world y-gon,
 Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon;
 For thanne thapostle seith, that I am free
 To wedde, a goddes half, wher it lyketh me.
 He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;
 Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.
 What rekketh me, thogh folk seye vileinye
 Of shrewed Lameth and his bigamye?
 I woot wel Abraham was an holy man,
 And Iacob eek, as ferforth as I can;
 And ech of hem hadde wyves mo than two;
 And many another holy man also.
 Whan saugh ye ever, in any maner age,
 That hye god defended mariage
 By expres word? I pray you, telleth me;
 Or wher comanded he virginitee?

I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,
Thapostel, whan he speketh of maydenhede;
He seyde, that precept ther-of hadde he noon.
Men may conseil a womman to been oon,
But conseil is no comandement;
He putte it in our owene Iugement.
For hadde god comanded maydenhede,
Thanne hadde he dampned wedding with the dede;
And certes, if ther were no seed y-sowe,
Virginitee, wher-of than sholde it growe?
Poul dorste nat comanden atte leste
A thing of which his maister yaf noon heste.
The dart is set up for virginitee;
Cacche who so may, who renneth best lat see.
But this word is nat take of every wight,
But ther as god list give it of his might.
I woot wel, that thapostel was a mayde;
But natheless, thogh that he wroot and sayde,
He wolde that every wight were swich as he,
Al nis but conseil to virginitee;
And for to been a wyf, he yaf me leve
Of indulgence; so it is no repreve
To wedde me, if that my make dye,
With-oute excepcioun of bigamy.
Al were it good no womman for to touche,
He mente as in his bed or in his couche;
For peril is bothe fyr and tow tassemble;
Ye knowe what this ensample may resemble.
This is al and som, he heeld virginitee
More parfit than wedding in freletee.
Freelte clepe I, but-if that he and she
Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.
I graunte it wel, I have noon envye,
Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamy;
Hem lyketh to be clene, body and goost,
Of myn estaat I nil nat make no boost.
For wel ye knowe, a lord in his houshold,
He hath nat every vessel al of gold;
Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse.
God clepeth folk to him in sondry wyse,
And everich hath of god a propre yifte,
Som this, som that,—as him lyketh shifte.
Virginitee is greet perfeccioun,
And continence eek with devocioun.
But Crist, that of perfeccioun is welle,
Bad nat every wight he shold go selle
All that he hadde, and give it to the pore,
And in swich wyse folwe hime and his fore.
He spak to hem that wolde live parfitly;
And lordinges, by your leve, that am nat I.
I wol bistowe the flour of al myn age
In the actes and in fruit of mariage.
Telle me also, to what conclusioun
Were membres maad of generacioun,
And for what profit was a wight y-wroght?

Trusteth right wel, they wer nat maad for noght.
 Glose who-so wole, and seye bothe up and doun,
 That they were maked for purgacioun
 Of urine, and our bothe thinges smale
 Were eek to knowe a femele from a male,
 And for noone other cause: sey ye no?
 The experience woot wel it is noght so;
 So that the clerkes be nat with me wrothe,
 I sey this, that they maked been for bothe,
 This is to seye, for office, and for ese
 Of engendrure, ther we nat god displese.
 Why sholde men elles in hir bokes sette,
 That man shal yelde to his wyf hir dette?
 Now wher-with sholde he make his payement,
 If he ne used his sely instrument?
 Than were they maad up-on a creature,
 To purge uryne, and eek for engendrure.
 But I seye noght that every wight is holde,
 That hath swich harneys as I to yow tolde,
 To goon and usen hem in engendrure;
 Than sholde men take of chastitee no cure.
 Crist was a mayde, and shapen as a man,
 And many a seint, sith that the world bigan,
 Yet lived they ever in parfit chastitee.
 I nil envye no virginitee;
 Lat hem be breed of pured whete-seed,
 And lat us wyves hoten barly-breed;
 And yet with barly-breed, Mark telle can,
 Our lord Iesu refreshed many a man.
 In swich estaat as god hath cleped us
 I wol persevere, I nam nat precious.
 In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument
 As frely as my maker hath it sent.
 If I be daungerous, god yeve me sorwe!
 Myn housbond shal it have bothe eve and morwe,
 Whan that him list com forth and paye his dette.
 An housbonde I wol have, I nil nat lette,
 Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral,
 And have his tribulacioun with-al
 Up-on his flessch, whyl that I am his wyf.
 I have the power duringe al my lyf
 Up-on his propre body, and noght he.
 Right thus the apostel tolde it un-to me;
 And bad our housbondes for to love us weel.
 Al this sentence me lyketh every-deel'—
 Up sterte the Pardoner, and that anon,
 'Now dame,' quod he, 'by god and by seint Iohn,
 Ye been a noble prechour in this cas!
 I was aboute to wedde a wyf; allas!
 What sholde I bye it on my flesh so dere?
 Yet hadde I lever wedde no wyf to-yere!'
 'Abyde!' quod she, 'my tale is nat bigonne;
 Nay, thou shalt drinken of another tonne
 Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale.
 And whan that I have told thee forth my tale

Of tribulacioun in mariage,
Of which I am expert in al myn age,
This to seyn, my-self have been the whippe;—
Than maystow chese whether thou wolt sippe
Of thilke tonne that I shal abroche.
Be war of it, er thou to ny approche;
For I shal telle ensamples mo than ten.
Who-so that nil be war by othere men,
By him shul othere men corrected be.
The same wordes wryteth Ptholomee;
Rede in his Almageste, and take it there.’
‘Dame, I wolde praye yow, if your wil it were,’
Seyde this Pardoner, ‘as ye bigan,
Telle forth your tale, spareth for no man,
And teche us yonge men of your praktike.’
‘Gladly,’ quod she, ‘sith it may yow lyke.
But yet I praye to al this companye,
If that I speke after my fantasye,
As taketh not a-grief of that I seye;
For myn entente nis but for to pleye.
Now sires, now wol I telle forth my tale.—
As ever mote I drinken wyn or ale,
I shal seye sooth, tho housbondes that I hadde,
As three of hem were gode and two were badde.
The three men were gode, and riche, and olde;
Unnethe mighte they the statut holde
In which that they were bounden un-to me.
Ye woot wel what I mene of this, pardee!
As help me god, I laughe whan I thinke
How pitously a-night I made hem swinke;
And by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor.
They had me yeven hir gold and hir tresoor;
Me neded nat do lenger diligence
To winne hir love, or doon hem reverence.
They loved me so wel, by god above,
That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love!
A wys womman wol sette hir ever in oon
To gete hir love, ther as she hath noon.
But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn hond,
And sith they hadde me yeven all hir lond,
What sholde I taken hede hem for to plese,
But it were for my profit and myn ese?
I sette hem so a-werke, by my fey,
That many a night they songen "weilawey!"
The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,
That som men han in Essex at Dunmowe.
I governed hem so wel, after my lawe,
That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe
To bringe me gaye thinges fro the fayre.
They were ful glad whan I spak to hem fayre;
For god it woot, I chidde hem spitously.
Now herkneth, how I bar me proprely,
Ye wyse wyves, that can understonde.
Thus shul ye speke and bere hem wrong on honde;
For half so boldely can ther no man

Swere and lyen as a womman can.
 I sey nat this by wyves that ben wyse,
 But-if it be whan they hem misavyse.
 A wys wyf, if that she can hir good,
 Shal beren him on hond the cow is wood,
 And take witnesse of hir owene mayde
 Of hir assent; but herkneth how I sayde.
 'Sir olde kaynard, is this thyn array?
 Why is my neighebores wyf so gay?
 She is honoured over-al ther she goth;
 I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty cloth.
 What dostow at my neighebores hous?
 Is she so fair? artow so amorous?
 What rowne ye with our mayde? *benedicite!*
 Sir olde lechour, lat thy Iapes be!
 And if I have a gossib or a freend,
 With-uten gilt, thou chydest as a feend,
 If that I walke or pleye un-to his hous!
 Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous,
 And prechest on thy bench, with yvel preef!
 Thou seist to me, it is a greet meschief
 To wedde a povre womman, for costage;
 And if that she be riche, of heigh parage,
 Than seistow that it is a tormentrye
 To suffre hir pryde and hir malencolye.
 And if that she be fair, thou verray knave,
 Thou seyst that every holour wol hir have;
 She may no whyle in chastitee abyde,
 That is assailed up-on ech a syde.
 Thou seyst, som folk desyre us for richesse,
 Somme for our shap, and somme for our fairnesse;
 And som, for she can outhur singe or daunce,
 And som, for gentillesse and daliaunce;
 Som, for hir handes and hir armes smale;
 Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale.
 Thou seyst, men may nat kepe a castel-wal;
 It may so longe assailed been over-al.
 And if that she be foul, thou seist that she
 Coveiteth every man that she may se;
 For as a spaynel she wol on him lepe,
 Til that she finde som man hir to chepe;
 Ne noon so grey goos goth ther in the lake,
 As, seistow, that wol been with-oute make.
 And seyst, it is an hard thing for to welde
 A thing that no man wol, his thanks, helde.
 Thus seistow, lorel, whan thou goost to bedde;
 And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,
 Ne no man that entendeth un-to hevene.
 With wilde thonder-dint and firy levene
 Mote thy welked nekke be to-broke!
 Thou seyst that dropping houses, and eek smoke,
 And chyding wyves, maken men to flee
 Out of hir owene hous; a! *benedicite!*
 What eyleth swich an old man for to chyde?
 Thou seyst, we wyves wol our vyces hyde

Til we be fast, and than we wol hem shewe;
 Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe!
 Thou seist, that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,
 They been assayed at diverse stoundes;
 Bacins, lavours, er that men hem bye,
 Spones and stoles, and al swich housbondrye,
 And so been pottes, clothes, and array;
 But folk of wyves maken noon assay
 Til they be wedded; olde dotard shrewe!
 And than, seistow, we wol oure vices shewe.
 Thou seist also, that it displeseth me
 But-if that thou wolt preyse my beautee,
 And but thou poure alwey up-on my face,
 And clepe me "faire dame" in every place;
 And but thou make a feste on thilke day
 That I was born, and make me fresh and gay,
 And but thou do to my norice honour,
 And to my chamberere with-inne my bour,
 And to my fadres folk and his allyes;—
 Thus seistow, olde barel ful of lyes!
 And yet of our apprentice Ianekyn,
 For his crisp heer, shyninge as gold so fyn,
 And for he squiereth me bothe up and doun,
 Yet hastow caught a fals suspeciou;—
 I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed to-morwe.
 But tel me this, why hydestow, with sorwe,
 The keyes of thy cheste away fro me?
 It is my good as wel as thyn, pardee.
 What wenestow make an idiot of our dame?
 Now by that lord, that called is seint Iame,
 Thou shalt nat bothe, thogh that thou were wood,
 Be maister of my body and of my good;
 That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne yën;
 What nedeth thee of me to enquere or spyën?
 I trowe, thou woldest loke me in thy chiste!
 Thou sholdest seye, "wyf, go wher thee liste,
 Tak your disport, I wol nat leve no talis;
 I knowe yow for a trewe wyf, dame Alis."
 We love no man that taketh kepe or charge
 Wher that we goon, we wol ben at our large.
 Of alle men y-blessed moot he be,
 The wyse astrologien Dan Ptholome,
 That seith this proverbe in his Almageste,
 "Of alle men his wisdom is the hyeste,
 That rekketh never who hath the world in honde."
 By this proverbe thou shalt understonde,
 Have thou y-nogh, what thar thee recche or care
 How merily that othere folkes fare?
 For certeyn, olde dotard, by your leve,
 Ye shul have queynte right y-nough at eve.
 He is to greet a nigard that wol werne
 A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne;
 He shal have never the lasse light, pardee;
 Have thou y-nough, thee thar nat pleyne thee.
 Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay

With clothing and with precious array,
 That it is peril of our chastitee;
 And yet, with sorwe, thou most enforce thee,
 And seye thise wordes in the apostles name,
 "In habit, maad with chastitee and shame,
 Ye wommen shul apparaille yow," quod he,
 "And noght in tressed heer and gay perree,
 As perles, ne with gold, ne clothes riche;"
 After thy text, ne after thy rubriche
 I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.
 Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat;
 For who-so wolde senge a cattles skin,
 Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in;
 And if the cattles skin be slyk and gay,
 She wol nat dwelle in house half a day,
 But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,
 To shewe hir skin, and goon a-caterwawed;
 This is to seye, if I be gay, sir shrewe,
 I wol renne out, my borel for to shewe.
 Sire olde fool, what eyleth thee to spyën?
 Thogh thou preye Argus, with his hundred yën,
 To be my warde-cors, as he can best,
 In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me lest;
 Yet coude I make his berd, so moot I thee.
 Thou seydest eek, that ther ben thinges three,
 The whiche thinges troublen al this erthe,
 And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe;
 O leve sir shrewe, Iesu shorte thy lyf!
 Yet prechestow, and seyst, an hateful wyf
 Y-rekened is for oon of thise meschances.
 Been ther none othere maner resemblances
 That ye may lykne your parables to,
 But-if a sely wyf be oon of tho?
 Thou lykenest wommanes love to helle,
 To bareyne lond, ther water may not dwelle.
 Thou lyknest it also to wilde fyr;
 The more it brenneth, the more it hath desyr
 To consume every thing that brent wol be.
 Thou seyst, that right as wormes shende a tree,
 Right so a wyf destroyeth hir housbonde;
 This knowe they that been to wyves bonde.
 Lordinges, right thus, as ye have understonde,
 Bar I stifly myne olde housbondes on honde,
 That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse;
 And al was fals, but that I took witnesse
 On Ianekin and on my nece also.
 O lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo,
 Ful giltelees, by goddes swete pyne!
 For as an hors I coude byte and whyne.
 I coude pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,
 Or elles often tyme hadde I ben spilt.
 Who-so that first to mille comth, first grint;
 I pleynd first, so was our werre y-stint.
 They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve
 Of thing of which they never agilde hir lyve.

Of wenches wolde I beren him on honde,
Whan that for syk unnethes mighte he stonde.
Yet tikled it his herte, for that he
Wende that I hadde of him so greet chiertee.
I swoor that al my walkinge out by nighte
Was for tespye wenches that he dighte;
Under that colour hadde I many a mirthe.
For al swich wit is yeven us in our birthe;
Deceite, weping, spinning god hath yive
To wommen kindly, whyl they may live.
And thus of o thing I avaunte me,
Atte ende I hadde the bettre in ech degree,
By sleighte, or force, or by som maner thing,
As by continuel murmur or grucching;
Namely a bedde hadden they meschaunce,
Ther wolde I chyde and do hem no plesaunce;
I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,
If that I felte his arm over my syde,
Til he had maad his raunson un-to me;
Than wolde I suffre him do his nycetee.
And ther-fore every man this tale I telle,
Winne who-so may, for al is for to selle.
With empty hand men may none haukes lure;
For winning wolde I al his lust endure,
And make me a feyned appetyt;
And yet in bacon hadde I never delyt;
That made me that ever I wolde hem chyde.
For thogh the pope had seten hem biside,
I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord.
For by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for word.
As help me verray god omnipotent,
Thogh I right now sholde make my testament,
I ne owe hem nat a word that it nis quit.
I broghte it so aboute by my wit,
That they moste yeve it up, as for the beste;
Or elles hadde we never been in reste.
For thogh he loked as a wood leoun,
Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun.
Thanne wolde I seye, 'gode lief, tak keep
How mekely loketh Wilkin oure sheep;
Com neer, my spouse, lat me ba thy cheke!
Ye sholde been al pacient and meke,
And han a swete spyced conscience,
Sith ye so preche of lobes pacience.
Suffreth alwey, sin ye so wel can preche;
And but ye do, certain we shal yow teche
That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.
Oon of us two moste bowen, doutelees;
And sith a man is more resonable
Than womman is, ye moste been suffrable.
What eyleth yow to grucche thus and grone?
Is it for ye wolde have my queynte allone?
Why taak it al, lo, have it every-deel;
Peter! I shrewe yow but ye love it weel!
For if I wolde selle my *bele chose*,

I coude walke as fresh as is a rose;
 But I wol kepe it for your owene tooth.
 Ye be to blame, by god, I sey yow sooth.
 Swiche maner wordes hadde we on honde.
 Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.
 My fourthe housbonde was a revelour,
 This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour;
 And I was yong and ful of ragerye,
 Stiborn and strong, and Ioly as a pye.
 Wel coude I daunce to an harpe smale,
 And singe, y-wis, as any nightingale,
 Whan I had dronke a draughte of swete wyn.
 Metellius, the foule cherl, the swyn,
 That with a staf birafted his wyf hir lyf,
 For she drank wyn, thogh I hadde been his wyf,
 He sholde nat han daunted me fro drinke;
 And, after wyn, on Venus moste I thinke:
 For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl,
 A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.
 In womman vinolent is no defence,
 This knowen lechours by experience.
 But, lord Crist! whan that it remembreth me
 Up-on my yowthe, and on my Iolitee,
 It tikleth me aboute myn herte rote.
 Unto this day it dooth myn herte bote
 That I have had my world as in my tyme.
 But age, allas! that al wol envenyme,
 Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith;
 Lat go, fare-wel, the devel go therwith!
 The flour is goon, ther is na-more to telle,
 The bren, as I best can, now moste I selle;
 But yet to be right mery wol I fonde.
 Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde.
 I seye, I hadde in herte greet despyt
 That he of any other had delyt.
 But he was quit, by god and by seint Iocel!
 I made him of the same wode a croce;
 Nat of my body in no foul manere,
 But certainly, I made folk swich chere,
 That in his owene grece I made him frye
 For angre, and for verray Ialousye.
 By god, in erthe I was his purgatorie,
 For which I hope his soule be in glorie.
 For god it woot, he sat ful ofte and song
 Whan that his shoo ful bitterly him wrong.
 Ther was no wight, save god and he, that wiste,
 In many wyse, how sore I him twiste.
 He deyde whan I cam fro Ierusalem,
 And lyth y-grave under the rode-beem,
 Al is his tombe noght so curious
 As was the sepulcre of him, Darius,
 Which that Appelles wroghte subtilly;
 It nis but wast to burie him preciously.
 Lat him fare-wel, god yeve his soule reste,
 He is now in the grave and in his cheste.

Now of my fifthe housbond wol I telle.
God lete his soule never come in helle!
And yet was he to me the moste shrewe;
That fele I on my ribbes al by rewe,
And ever shal, un-to myn ending-day.
But in our bed he was so fresh and gay,
And ther-with-al so wel coude he me glose,
Whan that he wolde han my *bele chose*,
That thogh he hadde me bet on every boon,
He coude winne agayn my love anoon.
I trowe I loved him beste, for that he
Was of his love daungerous to me.
We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye,
In this matere a queynte fantasye;
Wayte what thing we may nat lightly have,
Ther-after wol we crye al-day and crave.
Forbede us thing, and that desyren we;
Prees on us faste, and thanne wol we flee.
With daunger oute we al our chaffare;
Greet prees at market maketh dere ware,
And to greet cheep is holde at litel prys;
This knoweth every womman that is wys.
My fifthe housbonde, god his soule blesse!
Which that I took for love and no richesse,
He som-tyme was a clerk of Oxenford,
And had left scole, and wente at hoom to bord
With my gossib, dwellinge in oure toun,
God have hir soule! hir name was Alisoun.
She knew myn herte and eek my privetee
Bet than our parisshe-preest, so moot I thee!
To hir biwreyed I my conseil al.
For had myn housbonde pissed on a wal,
Or doon a thing that sholde han cost his lyf,
To hir, and to another worthy wyf,
And to my nece, which that I loved weel,
I wolde han told his conseil every-deel.
And so I dide ful often, god it woot,
That made his face ful often reed and hoot
For verray shame, and blamed him-self for he
Had told to me so greet a privetee.
And so bifel that ones, in a Lente,
(So often tymes I to my gossib wente,
For ever yet I lovede to be gay,
And for to walke, in March, Averille, and May,
Fro hous to hous, to here sondry talis),
That Iankin clerk, and my gossib dame Alis,
And I my-self, in-to the felde wente.
Myn housbond was at London al that Lente;
I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,
And for to see, and eek for to be seye
Of lusty folk; what wiste I wher my grace
Was shapen for to be, or in what place?
Therefore I made my visitaciouns,
To vigilies and to processions,
To preching eek and to thise pilgrimages,

To pleyes of miracles and mariages,
 And wered upon my gaye scarlet gytes.
 Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes,
 Upon my peril, frete hem never a deel;
 And wostow why? for they were used weel.
 Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.
 I seye, that in the feeldes walked we,
 Til trewely we hadde swich daliance,
 This clerk and I, that of my purveyance
 I spak to him, and seyde him, how that he,
 If I were widwe, sholde wedde me.
 For certainly, I sey for no bobance,
 Yet was I never with-outen purveyance
 Of mariage, nof othere thinges eek.
 I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek,
 That hath but oon hole for to sterte to,
 And if that faille, thanne is al y-do.
 I bar him on honde, he hadde enchanted me;
 My dame taughte me that soutiltee.
 And eek I seyde, I mette of him al night;
 He wolde han slayn me as I lay up-right,
 And al my bed was ful of verray blood,
 But yet I hope that he shal do me good;
 For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught.
 And al was fals, I dremed of it right naught,
 But as I folwed ay my dames lore,
 As wel of this as of other thinges more.
 But now sir, lat me see, what I shal seyn?
 A! ha! by god, I have my tale ageyn.
 Whan that my fourthe housbond was on bere,
 I weep algate, and made sory chere,
 As wyves moten, for it is usage,
 And with my coverchief covered my visage;
 But for that I was purveyed of a make,
 I weep but smal, and that I undertake.
 To chirche was myn housbond born a-morwe
 With neighebores, that for him maden sorwe;
 And Iankinoure clerk was oon of tho.
 As help me god, whan that I saugh him go
 After the bere, me thoughte he hadde a paire
 Of legges and of feet so clene and faire,
 That al myn herte I yaf un-to his hold.
 He was, I trowe, a twenty winter old,
 And I was forty, if I shal seye sooth;
 But yet I hadde alwey a coltes tooth.
 Gat-tothed I was, and that bica me weel;
 I hadde the prente of sēynt Venus seel.
 As help me god, I was a lusty oon,
 And faire and riche, and yong, and wel bigoon;
 And trewely, as myne housbondes tolde me,
 I had the beste *quoniam* mighte be.
 For certes, I am al Venerien
 In felinge, and myn herte is Marcien.
 Venus me yaf my lust, my likerousnesse,
 And Mars yaf me my sturdy hardinesse.

Myn ascendent was Taur, and Mars ther-inne.
Allas! alas! that ever love was sinne!
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun
By vertu of my constellacioun;
That made me I coude noght withdrawe
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.
Yet have I Martes mark up-on my face,
And also in another privee place.
For, god so wis be my savacioun,
I ne loved never by no discrecioun,
But ever folwede myn appetyt,
Al were he short or long, or blak or whyt;
I took no kepe, so that he lyked me,
How pore he was, ne eek of what degree.
What sholde I seye, but, at the monthes ende,
This Ioly clerk Iankin, that was so hende,
Hath wedded me with greet solempnitee,
And to him yaf I al the lond and fee
That ever was me yeven ther-bifore;
But afterward repented me ful sore.
He nolde suffre nothing of my list.
By god, he smoot me ones on the list,
For that I rente out of his book a leef,
That of the strook myn ere wex al deef.
Stiborn I was as is a leonesse,
And of my tonge a verray Iangleresse,
And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,
From hous to hous, al-though he had it sworn.
For which he often tymes wolde preche,
And me of olde Romain gestes teche,
How he, Simplicius Gallus, lefted his wyf,
And hir forsook for terme of al his lyf,
Noght but for open-headed he hir say
Lokinge out at his dore upon a day.
Another Romain tolde he me by name,
That, for his wyf was at a someres game
With-out his witing, he forsook hir eke.
And than wolde he up-on his Bible seke
That ilke proverbe of Ecclesiaste,
Wher he comandeth and forbedeth faste,
Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute;
Than wolde he seye right thus, with-outen doute,
"Who-so that buildeth his hous al of salwes,
And priketh his blinde hors over the falwes,
And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,
Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes!"
But al for noght, I sette noght an hawe
Of his proverbes nof his olde sawe,
Ne I wolde nat of him corrected be.
I hate him that my vices telleth me,
And so do mo, god woot! of us than I.
This made him with me wood al outrelly;
I nolde noght forbere him in no cas.
Now wol I seye yow sooth, by seint Thomas,
Why that I rente out of his book a leef,

For which he smoot me so that I was deaf.
 He hadde a book that gladly, night and day,
 For his desport he wolde rede alway.
 He cleped it Valerie and Theofraste,
 At whiche book he lough alwey ful faste.
 And eek ther was som-tyme a clerk at Rome,
 A cardinal, that highte Seint Ierome,
 That made a book agayn Iovinian;
 In whiche book eek ther was Tertulan,
 Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,
 That was abbesse nat fer fro Parys;
 And eek the Parables of Salomon,
 Ovydes Art, and bokes many on,
 And alle thise wer bounden in o volume.
 And every night and day was his custume,
 Whan he had leyser and vacacioun
 From other worldly occupacioun,
 To reden on this book of wikked wyves.
 He knew of hem mo legendes and lyves
 Than been of gode wyves in the Bible.
 For trusteth wel, it is an impossible
 That any clerk wol speke good of wyves,
 But-if it be of holy seintes lyves,
 Ne of noon other womman never the mo.
 Who peyntede the leoun, tel me who?
 By god, if wommen hadde writen stories,
 As clerkes han with-inne hir oratories,
 They wolde han writen of men more wikkednesse
 Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.
 The children of Mercurie and of Venus
 Been in hir wirking ful contrarious;
 Mercurie loveth wisdom and science,
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispence.
 And, for hir diverse disposicioun,
 Ech falleth in otheres exaltacioun;
 And thus, god woot! Mercurie is desolat
 In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;
 And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed;
 Therefore no womman of no clerk is preysed.
 The clerk, whan he is old, and may noght do
 Of Venus werkes worth his olde sho,
 Than sit he doun, and writ in his dotage
 That wommen can nat kepe hir mariage!
 But now to purpos, why I tolde thee
 That I was beten for a book, pardee.
 Up-on a night Iankin, that was our syre,
 Redde on his book, as he sat by the fyre,
 Of Eva first, that, for hir wikkednesse,
 Was al mankinde broght to wrecchednesse,
 For which that Iesu Crist him-self was slayn,
 That boghte us with his herte-blood agayn.
 Lo, here expres of womman may ye finde,
 That womman was the los of al mankinde.
 Tho redde he me how Sampson loste his heres,
 Slepinge, his lemman kitte hem with hir sheres;

Thurgh whiche tresoun loste he bothe his yën.
Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,
Of Hercules and of his Dianyre,
That caused him to sette himself a-fyre.
No-thing forgat he the penaunce and wo
That Socrates had with hise wyves two;
How Xantippa caste pisse up-on his heed;
This sely man sat stille, as he were deed;
He wyped his heed, namore dorste he seyn
But "er that thonder stinte, comth a reyn."
Of Phasipha, that was the quene of Crete,
For shrewednesse, him thoughte the tale swete;
Fy! spek na-more—it is a grisly thing—
Of hir horrible lust and hir lyking.
Of Clitemistra, for hir lecherye,
That falsly made hir housbond for to dye,
He redde it with ful good devocioun.
He tolde me eek for what occasioun
Amphiorax at Thebes loste his lyf;
Myn housbond hadde a legende of his wyf,
Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold
Hath prively un-to the Grekes told
Wher that hir housbonde hidde him in a place,
For which he hadde at Thebes sory grace.
Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye,
They bothe made hir housbondes for to dye;
That oon for love, that other was for hate;
Lyma hir housbond, on an even late,
Empoysoned hath, for that she was his fo.
Lucya, likerous, loved hir housbond so,
That, for he sholde alwey up-on hir thinke,
She yaf him swich a maner love-drinke,
That he was deed, er it were by the morwe;
And thus algates housbondes han sorwe.
Than tolde he me, how oon Latumius
Compleyned to his felawe Arrius,
That in his gardin growed swich a tree,
On which, he seyde, how that his wyves three
Hanged hem-self for herte despitous.
"O leve brother," quod this Arrius,
"Yif me a plante of thilke blissed tree,
And in my gardin planted shal it be!"
Of latter date, of wyves hath he red,
That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,
And lete hir lechour dighte hir al the night
Whyl that the corps lay in the floor up-right.
And somme han drive nayles in hir brayn
Whyl that they slepte, and thus they han hem slayn.
Somme han hem yeve poysoun in hir drinke.
He spak more harm than herte may bithinke.
And ther-with-al, he knew of mo proverbes
Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.
"Bet is," quod he, "thyn habitacioun
Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,
Than with a womman usinge for to chyde.

Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde
 Than with an angry wyf down in the hous;
 They been so wikked and contrarious;
 They haten that hir housbondes loveth ay."
 He seyde, "a womman cast hir shame away,
 Whan she cast of hir smok;" and forther-mo,
 "A fair womman, but she be chaast also,
 Is lyk a gold ring in a sowes nose."
 Who wolde wenen, or who wolde suppose
 The wo that in myn herte was, and pyne?
 And whan I saugh he wolde never fyne
 To reden on this cursed book al night,
 Al sodeynly three leves have I plight
 Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke,
 I with my fist so took him on the cheke,
 That in our fyr he fil bakward adoun.
 And he up-stirte as dooth a wood leoun,
 And with his fist he smoot me on the heed,
 That in the floor I lay as I were deed.
 And when he saugh how stille that I lay,
 He was agast, and wolde han fled his way,
 Til atte laste out of my swogh I breyde:
 "O! hastow slayn me, false thief?" I seyde,
 "And for my land thus hastow mordred me?
 Er I be deed, yet wol I kisse thee."
 And neer he cam, and kneled faire adoun,
 And seyde, "dere suster Alisoun,
 As help me god, I shal thee never smyte;
 That I have doon, it is thy-self to wyte.
 Foryeve it me, and that I thee biseke"—
 And yet eft-sones I hitte him on the cheke,
 And seyde, "theef, thus muchel am I wreke;
 Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke."
 But atte laste, with muchel care and wo,
 We fille acorded, by us selven two.
 He yaf me al the brydel in myn hond
 To han the governance of hous and lond,
 And of his tonge and of his hond also,
 And made him brenne his book anon right tho.
 And whan that I hadde geten un-to me,
 By maistrie, al the soveraynetee,
 And that he seyde, "myn owene trewe wyf,
 Do as thee lust the terme of al thy lyf,
 Keep thyn honour, and keep eek myn estaat"—
 After that day we hadden never debaat.
 God help me so, I was to him as kinde
 As any wyf from Denmark un-to Inde,
 And also trewe, and so was he to me.
 I prey to god that sit in magestee,
 So blesse his soule, for his mercy dere!
 Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol here.'

Biholde the wordes between the Somonour and the Frere.

The Frere lough, whan he hadde herd al this,
 'Now, dame,' quod he, 'so have I Ioye or blis,
 This is a long preamble of a tale!'

And whan the Somnour herde the Frere gale,
 'Lo!' quod the Somnour, 'goddess armes two!
 A frere wol entremette him ever-mo.
 Lo, gode men, a flye and eek a frere
 Wol falle in every dish and eek matere.
 What spekestow of preambulacioun?
 What! amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit down;
 Thou lettest our disport in this manere.'
 'Ye, woltow so, sir Somnour?' quod the Frere,
 'Now, by my feith, I shal, er that I go,
 Telle of a Somnour swich a tale or two,
 That alle the folk shal laughen in this place.'
 'Now elles, Frere, I bishrewe thy face,'
 Quod this Somnour, 'and I bishrewe me,
 But if I telle tales two or thre
 Of freres er I come to Sidingborne,
 That I shal make thyn herte for to morne;
 For wel I wool thy patience is goon.'
 Our hoste cryde 'pees! and that anon!'
 And seyde, 'lat the womman telle hir tale.
 Ye fare as folk that dronken been of ale.
 Do, dame, tel forth your tale, and that is best.'
 'Al redy, sir,' quod she, 'right as yow lest,
 If I have licence of this worthy Frere.'
 'Yis, dame,' quod he, 'tel forth, and I wol here.'
Here endeth the Wyf of Bathe hir Prologe.

THE TALE OF THE WYF OF BATHE.

Here biginneth the Tale of the Wyf of Bathe.

In tholde dayes of the king Arthour,
 Of which that Britons speken greet honour,
 All was this land fulfild of fayerye.
 The elf-queen, with hir Ioly companye,
 Daunced ful ofte in many a grene mede;
 This was the olde opinion, as I rede,
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago;
 But now can no man see none elves mo.
 For now the grete charitee and prayeres
 Of limitours and othere holy freres,
 That serchen every lond and every streem,
 As thikke as motes in the sonne-beem,
 Blessinge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
 Citees, burghes, castels, hye toures,
 Thropes, bernies, shipnes, dayeryes,
 This maketh that ther been no fayeryes.
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,
 Ther walketh now the limitour him-self
 In undermeles and in morweninges,
 And seyth his matins and his holy thinges
 As he goth in his limitacioun.
 Wommen may go saufly up and down,
 In every bush, or under every tree;
 Ther is noon other incubus but he,
 And he ne wol doon hem but dishonour.

And so bifel it, that this king Arthour
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelor,
 That on a day cam rydinge fro river;
 And happed that, allone as she was born,
 He saugh a mayde walkinge him biforn,
 Of whiche mayde anon, maugree hir heed,
 By verray force he rafte hir maydenheed;
 For which oppressioun was swich clamour
 And swich pursute un-to the king Arthour,
 That dampned was this knight for to be deed
 By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his heed
 Paraventure, swich was the statut tho;
 But that the quene and othere ladies mo
 So longe preyeden the king of grace,
 Til he his lyf him graunted in the place,
 And yaf him to the quene al at hir wille,
 To chese, whether she wolde him save or spille.
 The quene thanketh the king with al hir might,
 And after this thus spak she to the knight,
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme, up-on a day:
 'Thou standest yet,' quod she, 'in swich array,
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.
 I grante thee lyf, if thou canst tellen me
 What thing is it that wommen most desyren?
 Be war, and keep thy nekke-boon from yren.
 And if thou canst nat tellen it anon,
 Yet wol I yeve thee leve for to gon
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and lere
 An answee suffisant in this matere.
 And suretee wol I han, er that thou pace,
 Thy body for to yelden in this place.'
 Wo was this knight and sorwefully he syketh;
 But what! he may nat do al as him lyketh.
 And at the laste, he chees him for to wende,
 And come agayn, right at the yeres ende,
 With swich answee as god wolde him purveye;
 And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.
 He seketh every hous and every place,
 Wher-as he hopeth for to finde grace,
 To lerne, what thing wommen loven most;
 But he ne coude arryven in no cost,
 Wher-as he mighte finde in this matere
 Two creatures accordinge in-fere.
 Somme seyde, wommen loven best richesse,
 Somme seyde, honour, somme seyde, Iolynesse;
 Somme, riche array, somme seyden, lust abedde,
 And ofte tyme to be widwe and wedde.
 Somme seyde, that our hertes been most esed,
 Whan that we been y-flatered and y-pled.

He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye;
 A man shal winne us best with flaterye;
 And with attendance, and with bisnesse,
 Been we y-lymed, bothe more and lesse.
 And somme seyn, how that we loven best
 For to be free, and do right as us lest,

And that no man repreve us of our vyce,
But seye that we be wyse, and no-thing nyce.
For trewely, ther is noon of us alle,
If any wight wol clawe us on the galle,
That we nil kike, for he seith us sooth;
Assay, and he shal finde it that so dooth.
For be we never so vicious with-inne,
We wol been holden wyse, and clene of sinne.
And somme seyn, that greet delyt han we
For to ben holden stable and eek secree,
And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,
And nat biwreye thing that men us telle.
But that tale is nat worth a rake-stele;
Pardee, we wommen conne no-thing hele;
Witnesse on Myda; wol ye here the tale?
Ovyde, amonges othere things smale,
Seyde, Myda hadde, under his longe heres,
Growinge up-on his heed two asses eres,
The which vyce he hidde, as he best mighte,
Ful subtilly from every mannes sighte,
That, save his wyf, ther wiste of it na-mo.
He loved hir most, and trusted hir also;
He preyede hir, that to no creature
She sholde tellen of his disfigure.
She swoor him 'nay, for al this world to winne,
She nolde do that vileinye or sinne,
To make hir housbond han so foul a name;
She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame.'
But nathelees, hir thoughte that she dyde,
That she so longe sholde a conseil hyde;
Hir thoughte it swal so sore aboute hir herte,
That nedely som word hir moste asterte;
And sith she dorste telle it to no man,
Doun to a mareys faste by she ran;
Til she came there, hir herte was a-fyre,
And, as a bitore bombleth in the myre,
She leyde hir mouth un-to the water doun:
'Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,'
Quod she, 'to thee I telle it, and namo;
Myn housbond hath longe asses eres two!
Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute;
I mighte no lenger kepe it, out of doute,'
Heer may ye se, though we a tyme abyde,
Yet out it moot, we can no conseil hyde;
The remenant of the tale if ye wol here,
Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it lere.
This knight, of which my tale is specially,
Whan that he saugh he mighte nat come therby,
This is to seye, what wommen loven moost,
With-inne his brest ful sorweful was the goost;
But hoom he gooth, he mighte nat sojourne.
The day was come, that hoomward moste he tourne,
And in his wey it happed him to ryde,
In al this care, under a forest-syde,
Wher-as he saugh up-on a daunce go

Of ladies foure and twenty, and yet mo;
 Toward the whiche daunce he drow ful yerne,
 In hope that som wisdom sholde he lerne.
 But certainly, er he came fully there,
 Vanisshed was this daunce, he niste where.
 No creature saugh he that bar lyf,
 Save on the grene he saugh sittinge a wyf;
 A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.
 Agayn the knight this olde wyf gan ryse,
 And seyde, 'sir knight, heer-forth ne lyth no wey.
 Tel me, what that ye seken, by your fey?
 Paraventure it may the bettre be;
 Thise olde folk can muchel thing,' quod she.
 'My leve mooder,' quod this knight certeyn,
 'I nam but deed, but-if that I can seyn
 What thing it is that wommen most desyre;
 Coude ye me wisse, I wolde wel quyte your hyre.'
 'Plighte me thy trouthe, heer in myn hand,' quod she,
 'The nexte thing that I requere thee,
 Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy might;
 And I wol telle it yow er it be night.'
 'Have heer my trouthe,' quod the knight, 'I grante.'
 'Thanne,' quod she, 'I dar me wel avante,
 Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby,
 Up-on my lyf, the queen wol seye as I.
 Lat see which is the proudeste of hem alle,
 That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,
 That dar seye nay, of that I shal thee teche;
 Lat us go forth with-outen lenger speche.'
 Tho rouned she a pistel in his ere,
 And bad him to be glad, and have no fere.
 Whan they be comen to the court, this knight
 Seyde, 'he had holde his day, as he hadde hight,
 And redy was his answer,' as he sayde.
 Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,
 And many a widwe, for that they ben wyse,
 The quene hir-self sittinge as a lustyse,
 Assembled been, his answer for to here;
 And afterward this knight was bode appere.
 To every wight comanded was silence,
 And that the knight sholde telle in audience,
 What thing that worldly wommen loven best.
 This knight ne stood nat stille as doth a best,
 But to his questioun anon answerde
 With manly voys, that al the court it herde:
 'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,
 'Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee
 As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
 And for to been in maistrie him above;
 This is your moste desyr, thogh ye me kille,
 Doth as yow list, I am heer at your wille.'
 In al the court ne was ther wyf ne mayde,
 Ne widwe, that contraried that he sayde,
 But seyden, 'he was worthy han his lyf.'
 And with that word up stirte the olde wyf,

Which that the knight saugh sittinge in the grene:
'Mercy,' quod she, 'my sovereyn lady quene!
Er that your court departe, do me right.
I taughte this answeere un-to the knight;
For which he plighte me his trouthe there,
The firste thing I wolde of him requere,
He wolde it do, if it lay in his might.
Bifore the court than preye I thee, sir knight,'
Quod she, 'that thou me take un-to thy wyf;
For wel thou wost that I have kept thy lyf.
If I sey fals, sey nay, up-on thy fey!'
This knight answerde, 'allas! and weylawey!
I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.
For goddes love, as chees a newe requeste;
Tak al my good, and lat my body go.'
'Nay than,' quod she, 'I shrewe us bothe two!
For thogh that I be foul, and old, and pore,
I nolde for al the metal, ne for ore,
That under erthe is grave, or lyth above,
But-if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love.'
'My love?' quod he; 'nay, my dampnacioun!
Allas! that any of my nacioun
Sholde ever so foule disparaged be!'
But al for noght, the ende is this, that he
Constreyned was, he nedes moste hir wedde;
And taketh his olde wyf, and gooth to bedde.
Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,
That, for my negligence, I do no cure
To tellen yow the Ioye and al tharray
That at the feste was that ilke day.
To whiche thing shortly answeere I shal;
I seye, ther nas no Ioye ne feste at al,
Ther nas but hevinesse and muche sorwe;
For prively he wedded hir on a morwe,
And al day after hidde him as an oule;
So wo was him, his wyf looked so foule.
Greet was the wo the knight hadde in his thought,
Whan he was with his wyf a-bedde y-brought;
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro.
His olde wyf lay smylinge evermo,
And seyde, 'o dere housbond, *benedicite*!
Fareth every knight thus with his wyf as ye?
Is this the lawe of king Arthures hous?
Is every knight of his so dangerous?
I am your owene love and eek your wyf;
I am she, which that saved hath your lyf;
And certes, yet dide I yow never unright;
Why fare ye thus with me this firste night?
Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit;
What is my gilt? for goddes love, tel me it,
And it shal been amended, if I may.'
'Amended?' quod this knight, 'allas! nay, nay!
It wol nat been amended never mo!
Thou art so loothly, and so old also,
And ther-to comen of so lowe a kinde,

That litel wonder is, thogh I walwe and winde.
 So wolde god myn herte wolde breste!
 'Is this,' quod she, 'the cause of your unreste?'
 'Ye, certainly,' quod he, 'no wonder is.'
 'Now, sire,' quod she, 'I coude amende al this,
 If that me liste, er it were dayes three,
 So wel ye mighte here yow un-to me.
 But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
 As is descended out of old richesse,
 That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,
 Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
 Loke who that is most vertuous alway,
 Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay
 To do the gentil dedes that he can,
 And tak him for the grettest gentil man.
 Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,
 Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse.
 For thogh they yeve us al hir heritage,
 For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,
 Yet may they nat biquethe, for no-thing,
 To noon of us hir vertuous living,
 That made hem gentil men y-called be;
 And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.
 Wel can the wyse poete of Florence,
 That highte Dant, speken in this sentence;
 Lo in swich maner rym is Dantes tale:
 "Ful selde up ryseth by his branches smale
 Prowesse of man, for god, of his goodnesse,
 Wol that of him we clayme our gentillesse;"
 For of our eldres may we no-thing clayme
 But temporel thing, that man may hurte and mayme.
 Eek every wight wot this as wel as I,
 If gentillesse were planted naturelly
 Un-to a certeyn linage, doun the lyne,
 Privee ne apert, than wolde they never fyne
 To doon of gentillesse the faire offyce;
 They mighte do no vileinye or vyce.
 Tak fyr, and ber it in the derkeste hous
 Bitwix this and the mount of Caucasus,
 And lat men shette the dores and go thenne;
 Yet wol the fyr as faire lye and brenne,
 As twenty thousand men mighte it biholde;
 His office naturel ay wol it holde,
 Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye.
 Heer may ye see wel, how that genterye
 Is nat annexed to possessioun,
 Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun
 Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo! in his kinde.
 For, god it woot, men may wel often finde
 A lordes sone do shame and vileinye;
 And he that wol han prys of his gentrye
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,
 And hadde hise eldres noble and vertuous,
 And nil him-selven do no gentil dedis,
 Ne folwe his gentil auncestre that deed is,

He nis nat gentil, be he duk or erl;
For vileyys sinful dedes make a cherl.
For gentillesse nis but renomee
Of thyne auncestres, for hir heigh bountee,
Which is a strange thing to thy persone.
Thy gentillesse cometh fro god allone;
Than comth our verray gentillesse of grace,
It was no-thing biquethe us with our place.
Thenketh how noble, as seith Valerius,
Was thilke Tullius Hostilius,
That out of povert roos to heigh noblesse.
Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boëce,
Ther shul ye seen expres that it no drede is,
That he is gentil that doth gentil dedis;
And therfore, leve housbond, I thus conclude,
Al were it that myne auncestres were rude,
Yet may the hye god, and so hope I,
Grante me grace to liven vertuously.
Thanne am I gentil, whan that I biginne
To liven vertuously and weyve sinne.
And ther-as ye of povert me repreve,
The hye god, on whom that we bileve,
In wilful povert chees to live his lyf.
And certes every man, mayden, or wyf,
May understonde that Iesus, hevene king,
Ne wolde nat chese a vicious living.
Glad povert is an honest thing, certeyn;
This wol Senek and othere clerkes seyn.
Who-so that halt him payd of his povert,
I holde him riche, al hadde he nat a sherte.
He that coveyteth is a povre wight,
For he wolde han that is nat in his might.
But he that noght hath, ne coveyteth have,
Is riche, al-though ye holde him but a knave.
Verray povert, it singeth proprely;
Juvenal seith of povert merily:
"The povre man, whan he goth by the weye,
Bifore the theves he may singe and pleye."
Povert is hateful good, and, as I gesse,
A ful greet bringer out of bisnesse;
A greet amender eek of sapience
To him that taketh it in pacience.
Povert is this, al-though it seme elenge:
Possessioun, that no wight wol chalenge.
Povert ful ofte, whan a man is lowe,
Maketh his god and eek him-self to knowe.
Povert a spectacle is, as thinketh me,
Thurgh which he may his verray frendes see.
And therfore, sire, sin that I noght yow greve,
Of my povert na-more ye me repreve.
Now, sire, of elde ye repreve me;
And certes, sire, thogh noon auctoritee
Were in no book, ye gentils of honour
Seyn that men sholde an old wight doon favour,
And clepe him fader, for your gentillesse;

And auctours shal I finden, as I gesse.
 Now ther ye seye, that I am foul and old,
 Than drede you noght to been a cokewold;
 For filthe and elde, al-so moot I thee,
 Been grete wardeyns up-on chastitee.
 But nathelees, sin I knowe your delyt,
 I shal fulfille your worldly appetyt.
 Chese now,' quod she, 'oon of thise thinges tweye,
 To han me foul and old til that I deye,
 And be to yow a trewe humble wyf,
 And never yow displese in al my lyf,
 Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
 And take your aventure of the repair
 That shal be to your hous, by-cause of me,
 Or in som other place, may wel be.
 Now chese your-selven, whether that yow lyketh.'
 This knight avyseth him and sore syketh,
 But atte laste he seyde in this manere,
 'My lady and my love, and wyf so dere,
 I put me in your wyse governance;
 Cheseth your-self, which may be most plesance,
 And most honour to yow and me also.
 I do no fors the whether of the two;
 For as yow lyketh, it suffiseth me.'
 'Thanne have I gete of yow maistrye,' quod she,
 'Sin I may chese, and governe as me lest?'
 'Ye, certes, wyf,' quod he, 'I holde it best.'
 'Kis me,' quod she, 'we be no lenger wrothe;
 For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,
 This is to seyn, ye, bothe fair and good.
 I prey to god that I mot sterven wood,
 But I to yow be al-so good and trewe
 As ever was wyf, sin that the world was newe.
 And, but I be to-morn as fair to sene
 As any lady, emperyce, or quene,
 That is bitwixe the est and eke the west,
 Doth with my lyf and deeth right as yow lest.
 Cast up the curtin, loke how that it is.'
 And whan the knight saugh verrailly al this,
 That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to,
 For Ioye he hente hir in his armes two,
 His herte bathed in a bath of blisse;
 A thousand tyme a-rewe he gan hir kisse.
 And she obeyed him in every thing
 That mighte doon him plesance or lyking.
 And thus they live, un-to hir lyves ende,
 In parfit Ioye; and Iesu Crist us sende
 Housbondes meke, yonge, and fresshe a-bedde,
 And grace toverbyde hem that we wedde.
 And eek I preye Iesu shorte hir lyves
 That wol nat be governed by hir wyves;
 And olde and angry nigardes of dispence,
 God sende hem sone verray pestilence.

Here endeth the Wyves Tale of Bathe.

THE FRIAR'S PROLOGUE.**The Prologe of the Freres tale.**

This worthy limitour, this noble Frere,
 He made alwey a maner louring chere
 Upon the Somnour, but for honestee
 No vileyns word as yet to him spak he.
 But atte laste he seyde un-to the Wyf,
 'Dame,' quod he, 'god yeve yow right good lyf!
 Ye han heer touched, al-so moot I thee,
 In scole-matere greet difficultee;
 Ye han seyd muchel thing right wel, I seye;
 But dame, here as we ryden by the weye,
 Us nedeth nat to speken but of game,
 And lete auctoritees, on goddes name,
 To preching and to scole eek of clergie.
 But if it lyke to this companye,
 I wol yow of a somnour telle a game.
 Pardee, ye may wel knowe by the name,
 That of a somnour may no good be sayd;
 I praye that noon of you be yvel apayd.
 A somnour is a renner up and down
 With mandements for fornicacioun,
 And is y-bet at every tounes ende.'
 Our host tho spak, 'a! sire, ye sholde be hende
 And curteys, as a man of your estaat;
 In companye we wol have no debaat.
 Telleth your tale, and lat the Somnour be.'
 'Nay,' quod the Somnour, 'lat him seye to me
 What so him list; whan it comth to my lot,
 By god, I shal him quyten every grot.
 I shal him tellen which a greet honour
 It is to be a flateringe limitour;
 And his offyce I shal him telle, y-wis.'
 Our host answerde, 'pees, na-more of this.'
 And after this he seyde un-to the Frere,
 'Tel forth your tale, leve maister deere.'

Here endeth the Prologe of the Frere.

THE FRERES TALE.**Here biginneth the Freres tale.**

Whilom ther was dwellinge in my contree
 An erchedeken, a man of heigh degree,
 That boldely dide execucioun
 In punisshinge of fornicacioun,
 Of wicchecraft, and eek of bauderye,
 Of diffamacioun, and avoutrye,
 Of chirche-reves, and of testaments,
 Of contractes, and of lakke of sacraments,
 And eek of many another maner cryme
 Which nedeth nat rehercen at this tyme;
 Of usure, and of symonye also.
 But certes, lechours dide he grettest wo;
 They sholde singen, if that they were hent;
 And smale tytheres weren foule y-shent.

If any persone wolde up-on hem pleyne,
 Ther mighte asterte him no pecunial peyne.
 For smale tythes and for smal offringe,
 He made the peple pitously to singe.
 For er the bisshop caughte hem with his hook,
 They weren in the erchedeknes book.
 Thanne hadde he, thurgh his Iurisdiccoun,
 Power to doon on hem correccioun.
 He hadde a Somnour redy to his hond,
 A slyer boy was noon in Engeland;
 For subtilly he hadde his espaille,
 That taughte him, wher that him mighte availle.
 He coude spare of lechours oon or two,
 To techen him to foure and twenty mo.
 For thogh this Somnour wood were as an hare,
 To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare;
 For we been out of his correccioun;
 They han of us no Iurisdiccoun,
 Ne never shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.
 'Peter! so been the wommen of the styves,'
 Quod the Somnour, 'y-put out of my cure!'
 'Pees, with mischance and with misaventure,'
 Thus seyde our host, 'and lat him telle his tale.
 Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somnour gale,
 Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister dere.'
 This false thief, this Somnour, quod the Frere,
 Hadde alwey baudes redy to his hond,
 As any hauk to lure in Engeland,
 That tolde him al the secree that they knewe;
 For hir acquyentance was nat come of-newe.
 They weren hise approwours prively;
 He took him-self a greet profit therby;
 His maister knew nat alwey what he wan.
 With-uten mandement, a lewed man
 He coude somne, on peyne of Cristes curs,
 And they were gladde for to fille his purs,
 And make him grete festes atte nale.
 And right as Iudas hadde purses smale,
 And was a thief, right swich a thief was he;
 His maister hadde but half his duëtee.
 He was, if I shal yeven him his laude,
 A thief, and eek a Somnour, and a baude.
 He hadde eek wenches at his retenue,
 That, whether that sir Robert or sir Huwe,
 Or Iakke, or Rauf, or who-so that it were,
 That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere;
 Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent.
 And he wolde fecche a feyned mandement,
 And somne hem to the chapitre bothe two,
 And pile the man, and lete the wenche go.
 Thanne wolde he seye, 'frend, I shal for thy sake
 Do stryken hir out of our lettres blake;
 Thee thar na-more as in this cas travaille;
 I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle.'
 Certeyn he knew of bryberyes mo

Than possible is to telle in yeres two.
 For in this world nis dogge for the bowe,
 That can an hurt deer from an hool y-knowe,
 Bet than this Somnour knew a sly lechour,
 Or an avouter, or a paramour.
 And, for that was the fruit of al his rente,
 Therfore on it he sette al his entente.
 And so bifel, that ones on a day
 This Somnour, ever waiting on his pray,
 Rood for to somne a widwe, an old ribybe,
 Feynyng a cause, for he wolde brybe.
 And happed that he saugh biforn him ryde
 A gay yeman, under a forest-syde.
 A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene;
 He hadde up-on a courtepy of grene;
 An hat up-on his heed with frenges blake.
 'Sir,' quod this Somnour, 'hay! and wel a-take!'
 'Wel-come,' quod he, 'and every good felawe!
 Wher rydestow under this grene shawe?'
 Seyde this yeman, 'wiltow fer to day?'
 This Somnour him answerde, and seyde, 'nay;
 Heer faste by,' quod he, 'is myn entente
 To ryden, for to reysen up a rente
 That longeth to my lordes duëtee.
 'Artow thanne a bailly?' 'Ye!' quod he.
 He dorste nat, for verray filthe and shame,
 Seye that he was a somnour, for the name.
 'Depardieux,' quod this yeman, 'dere brother,
 Thou art a bailly, and I am another.
 I am unknowen as in this contree;
 Of thyn aqueyntance I wolde praye thee,
 And eek of brotherhede, if that yow leste.
 I have gold and silver in my cheste;
 If that thee happe to comen in our shyre,
 Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desyre.'
 'Grantmercy,' quod this Somnour, 'by my feith!'
 Everich in otheres hand his trouthe leith,
 For to be sworne bretheren til they deye.
 In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.
 This Somnour, which that was as ful of langles,
 (no)
 As ful of venim been thise wariangles,
 And ever enquering up-on every thing,
 'Brother,' quod he, 'where is now your dwelling,
 Another day if that I sholde yow seche?'
 This yeman him answerde in softe speche,
 'Brother,' quod he, 'fer in the north contree,
 Wher, as I hope, som-tyme I shal thee see.
 Er we departe, I shal thee so wel wisse,
 That of myn hous ne shaltow never misse.'
 'Now, brother,' quod this Somnour, 'I yow preye,
 Teche me, whyl that we ryden by the weye,
 Sin that ye been a baillif as am I,
 Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully
 In myn offyce how I may most winne;

And spareth nat for conscience ne sinne,
 But as my brother tel me, how do ye?'
 'Now, by my trouthe, brother dere,' seyde he,
 'As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale,
 My wages been ful streite and ful smale.
 My lord is hard to me and daungerous,
 And myn offyce is ful laborous;
 And therfore by extorcions I live.
 For sothe, I take al that men wol me yive;
 Algate, by sleighte or by violence,
 Fro yeer to yeer I winne al my dispence.
 I can no better telle feithfully.'
 'Now, certes,' quod this Somnour, 'so fare I;
 I spare nat to taken, god it woot,
 But if it be to hevy or to hoot.
 What I may gete in conseil prively,
 No maner conscience of that have I;
 Nere myn extorcioun, I mighte nat liven,
 Ne of swiche lapes wol I nat be shriven.
 Stomak ne conscience ne knowe I noon;
 I shrewe thise shrifte-fadres everichoon.
 Wel be we met, by god and by seint Iame!
 But, leve brother, tel me than thy name,'
 Quod this Somnour; and in this mene-whyle,
 This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.
 'Brother,' quod he, 'wiltow that I thee telle?
 I am a feend, my dwelling is in helle.
 And here I ryde about my purchasing,
 To wite wher men wolde yeve me any thing.
 My purchas is theeffect of al my rente.
 Loke how thou rydest for the same entente,
 To winne good, thou rekkest never how;
 Right so fare I, for ryde wolde I now
 Un-to the worldes ende for a preye.'
 'A,' quod this Somnour, '*benedicite*, what sey ye?
 I wende ye were a yeman trewely.
 Ye han a mannes shap as wel as I;
 Han ye figure than determinat
 In helle, ther ye been in your estat?'
 'Nay, certainly,' quod he, 'ther have we noon;
 But whan us lyketh, we can take us oon,
 Or elles make yow seme we ben shape
 Som-tyme lyk a man, or lyk an ape;
 Or lyk an angel can I ryde or go.
 It is no wonder thing thogh it be so;
 A lousy Iogelour can deceyve thee,
 And pardee, yet can I more craft than he.'
 'Why,' quod the Somnour, 'ryde ye thanne or goon
 In sondry shap, and nat alwey in oon?'
 'For we,' quod he, 'wol us swich formes make
 As most able is our preyes for to take.'
 'What maketh yow to han al this labour?'
 'Ful many a cause, leve sir Somnour,'
 Seyde this feend, 'but alle thing hath tyme.
 The day is short, and it is passed pryme,

And yet ne wan I no-thing in this day.
I wol entende to winnen, if I may,
And nat entende our wittes to declare.
For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare
To understonde, al-thogh I tolde hem thee.
But, for thou axest why labouren we;
For, som-tyme, we ben goddes instruments,
And menes to don his comandements,
Whan that him list, up-on his creatures,
In divers art and in divers figures.
With-outen him we have no might, certayn,
If that him list to stonden ther-agayn.
And som-tyme, at our prayere, han we leve
Only the body and nat the soule greve;
Witnesse on Iob, whom that we diden wo.
And som-tyme han we might of bothe two,
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke.
And somtyme be we suffred for to seke
Up-on a man, and doon his soule unreste,
And nat his body, and al is for the beste.
Whan he withstandeth our temptacioun,
It is a cause of his savacioun;
Al-be-it that it was nat our entente
He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde him hente.
And som-tyme be we servant un-to man,
As to the erchebisshop Seint Dunstan,
And to the apostles servant eek was I.
'Yet tel me,' quod the Somnour, 'feithfully,
Make ye yow newe bodies thus alway
Of elements?' the feend answerde, 'nay;
Som-tyme we feyne, and som-tyme we aryse
With dede bodies in ful sondry wyse,
And speke as renably and faire and wel
As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel.
And yet wol som men seye it was nat he;
I do no fors of your divinitee.
But o thing warne I thee, I wol nat lape,
Thou wolt algates wite how we ben shape;
Thou shalt her-afterward, my brother dere,
Com ther thee nedeth nat of me to lere.
For thou shalt by thyn owene experience
Conne in a chayer rede of this sentence
Bet than Virgyle, whyl he was on lyve,
Or Dant also; now lat us ryde blyve.
For I wol holde companye with thee
Til it be so, that thou forsake me.'
'Nay,' quod this Somnour, 'that shal nat bityde;
I am a yeman, knowen is ful wyde;
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas.
For though thou were the devel Sathanas,
My trouthe wol I holde to my brother,
As I am sworn, and ech of us til other
For to be trewe brother in this cas;
And bothe we goon abouten our purchas.
Tak thou thy part, what that men wol thee yive,

And I shal myn; thus may we bothe live.
 And if that any of us have more than other,
 Lat him be trewe, and parte it with his brother.
 'I graunte,' quod the devel, 'by my fey.'
 And with that word they ryden forth hir wey.
 And right at the entring of the tounes ende,
 To which this Somnour shoop him for to wende,
 They saugh a cart, that charged was with hey,
 Which that a carter droof forth in his wey.
 Deep was the wey, for which the carte stood.
 The carter smoot, and cryde, as he were wood,
 'Hayt, Brok! hayt, Scot! what spare ye for the stones?
 The feend,' quod he, 'yow fecche body and bones,
 As ferforthly as ever were ye foled!
 So muche wo as I have with yow tholed!
 The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey!'
 This Somnour seyde, 'heer shal we have a pley;
 And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne were,
 Ful prively, and rouned in his ere:
 'Herkne, my brother, herkne, by thy feith;
 Herestow nat how that the carter seith?
 Hent it anon, for he hath yeve it thee,
 Bothe hey and cart, and eek hise caples three.'
 'Nay,' quod the devel, 'god wot, never a deel;
 It is nat his entente, trust me weel.
 Axe him thy-self, if thou nat trowest me,
 Or elles stint a while, and thou shall see.'
 This carter thakketh his hors upon the croupe,
 And they bigonne drawen and to-stoupe;
 'Heyt, now!' quod he, 'ther Iesu Crist yow blesse,
 And al his handwerk, bothe more and lesse!
 That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy!
 I pray god save thee and sēynt Loy!
 Now is my cart out of the slow, pardee!'
 'Lo! brother,' quod the feend, 'what tolde I thee?
 Heer may ye see, myn owene dere brother,
 The carl spak oo thing, but he thoghte another.
 Lat us go forth abouten our viage;
 Heer winne I no-thing up-on cariage.'
 Whan that they comen som-what out of toune,
 This Somnour to his brother gan to rounne,
 'Brother,' quod he, 'heer woneth an old rebekke,
 That hadde almost as lief to lese hir nekke
 As for to yeve a peny of hir good.
 I wol han twelf pens, though that she be wood,
 Or I wol sompne hir un-to our offyce;
 And yet, god woot, of hir knowe I no vyce.
 But for thou canst nat, as in this contree,
 Winne thy cost, tak heer ensample of me.'
 This Somnour clappeth at the widwes gate.
 'Com out,' quod he, 'thou olde viritrate!
 I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee!'
 'Who clappeth?' seyde this widwe, '*benedicite!*
 God save you, sire, what is your swete wille?'
 'I have,' quod he, 'of somonce here a bille;

Up peyne of cursing, loke that thou be
To-morn bifore the erchedeknes knee
Tanswere to the court of certeyn thinges.
'Now, lord,' quod she, 'Crist Iesu, king of kinges,
So wisly helpe me, as I ne may.
I have been syk, and that ful many a day.
I may nat go so fer,' quod she, 'ne ryde,
But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.
May I nat axe a libel, sir Somnour,
And answeere there, by my procutour,
To swich thing as men wol opposen me?'
'Yis,' quod this Somnour, 'pay anon, lat se,
Twelf pens to me, and I wol thee acquyte.
I shall no profit han ther-by but lyte;
My maister hath the profit, and nat I.
Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;
Yif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarie.'
'Twelf pens,' quod she, 'now lady Seinte Marie
So wisly help me out of care and sinne,
This wyde world thogh that I sholde winne,
Ne have I nat twelf pens with-inne myn hold.
Ye knowen wel that I am povre and old;
Kythe your almesse on me povre wrecche.'
'Nay than,' quod he, 'the foule feend me fecche
If I thexcuse, though them shul be spilt!'
'Alas,' quod she, 'god woot, I have no gilt.'
'Pay me,' quod he, 'or by the swete seinte Anne,
As I wol bere away thy newe panne
For dette, which that thou owest me of old,
Whan that thou madest thyn housbond cokewold,
I payde at hoom for thy correccioun.'
'Thou lixt,' quod she, 'by my savacioun!
Ne was I never er now, widwe ne wyf,
Somoned un-to your court in al my lyf;
Ne never I nas but of my body trewe!
Un-to the devel blak and rough of hewe
Yeve I thy body and my panne also!'
And whan the devel herde hir cursen so
Up-on hir knees, he seyde in this manere,
'Now Mabely, myn owene moder dere,
Is this your wil in earnest, that ye seye?'
'The devel,' quod she, 'so fecche him er he deye,
And panne and al, but he wol him repente!'
'Nay, olde stot, that is nat myn entente,'
Quod this Somnour, 'for to repente me,
For any thing that I have had of thee;
I wolde I hadde thy smok and every clooth!'
'Now, brother,' quod the devel, 'be nat wrooth;
Thy body and this panne ben myne by right.
Thou shalt with me to helle yet to-night,
Where thou shalt knowen of our privetee
More than a maister of divinitee.'
And with that word this foule feend him hente;
Body and soule, he with the devel wente
Wher-as that somnours han hir heritage.

And god, that maked after his image
 Mankinde, save and gyde us alle and some;
 And leve this Somnour good man to bicomme!
 Lordinges, I coude han told yow, quod this Frere,
 Hadde I had leyser for this Somnour here,
 After the text of Crist [and] Poul and Iohn
 And of our othere doctours many oon,
 Swiche peynes, that your hertes mighte agryse,
 Al-be-it so, no tonge may devyse,
 Though that I mighte a thousand winter telle,
 The peyne of thilke cursed hous of helle.
 But, for to kepe us fro that cursed place,
 Waketh, and preyeth Iesu for his grace
 So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas.
 Herketh this word, beth war as in this cas;
 The leoun sit in his await alway
 To slee the innocent, if that he may.
 Disposeth ay your hertes to withstonde
 The feend, that yow wolde make thral and bonde.
 He may nat tempten yow over your might;
 For Crist wol be your champion and knight.
 And prayeth that this Somnours hem repente
 Of hir misdeds, er that the feend hem hente.
Here endeth the Freres tale.

THE SOMNOUR'S PROLOGUE

The prologe of the Somnours Tale.

This Somnour in his stiropes hye stood;
 Up-on this Frere his herte was so wood,
 That lyk an aspen leef he quook for yre.
 'Lordinges,' quod he, 'but o thing I desyre;
 I yow biseke that, of your curteisye,
 Sin ye han herd this false Frere lye,
 As suffereth me I may my tale telle!
 This Frere bosteth that he knoweth helle,
 And god it woot, that it is litel wonder;
 Freres and feendes been but lyte a-sonder.
 For pardee, ye han ofte tyme herd telle,
 How that a frere ravissshed was to helle
 In spirit ones by a visioun;
 And as an angel ladde him up and down,
 To shewen him the peynes that ther were,
 In al the place saugh he nat a frere;
 Of other folk he saugh y-nowe in wo.
 Un-to this angel spak the frere tho:
 "Now, sir," quod he, "han freres swich a grace
 That noon of hem shal come to this place?"
 "Yis," quod this angel, "many a millioun!"
 And un-to Sathanas he ladde him down.
 "And now hath Sathanas," seith he, "a tayl
 Brodder than of a carrik is the sayl.
 Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas!" quod he,
 "Shewe forth thyn ers, and lat the frere see
 Wher is the nest of freres in this place!"

And, er that half a furlong-wey of space,
 Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve,
 Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve
 Twenty thousand freres in a route,
 And thurgh-out helle swarmeden aboute;
 And comen agayn, as faste as they may gon,
 And in his ers they crepten everichon.
 He clapte his tayl agayn, and lay ful stille.
 This frere, whan he loked hadde his fille
 Upon the torments of this sory place,
 His spirit god restored of his grace
 Un-to his body agayn, and he awook;
 But natheles, for fere yet he quook,
 So was the develes ers ay in his minde,
 That is his heritage of verray kinde.
 God save yow alle, save this cursed Frere;
 My prologe wol I ende in this manere.'
Here endeth the Prologe of the Somnours Tale.

THE SOMNOURS TALE.

Here biginneth the Somonour his Tale.
 Lordinges, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,
 A mersshy contree called Holderneshe,
 In which ther wente a limitour aboute,
 To preche, and eek to begge, it is no doute.
 And so bifel, that on a day this frere
 Had preched at a chirche in his manere,
 And specially, aboven every thing,
 Excited he the peple in his preching,
 To trentals, and to yeve, for goddes sake,
 Wher-with men mighten holy houses make,
 Ther as divyne service is honoured,
 Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured,
 Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be yive,
 As to possessioners, that mowen live,
 Thanked be god, in wele and habundaunce.
 'Trentals,' seyde he, 'deliveren fro penaunce
 Hir freendes soules, as wel olde as yonge,
 Ye, whan that they been hastily y-songe;
 Nat for to holde a preest Ioly and gay,
 He singeth nat but o masse in a day;
 Delivereth out,' quod he, 'anon the soules;
 Ful hard it is with fleshhook or with oules
 To been y-clawed, or to brenne or bake;
 Now spede yow hastily, for Cristes sake.'
 And whan this frere had seyd al his entente,
 With *qui cum patre* forth his wey he wente.
 Whan folk in chirche had yeve him what hem leste,
 He wente his wey, no lenger wolde he reste,
 With scrippe and tipped staf, y-tukked hye;
 In every hous he gan to poure and pryde,
 And beggeth mele, and chese, or elles corn.
 His felawe hadde a staf tipped with horn,
 A peyre of tables al of yvory,

And a poyntel polissshed fetisly,
 And wroot the names alwey, as he stood,
 Of alle folk that yaf him any good,
 Ascaunces that he wolde for hem preye.
 'Yeve us a busschel whete, malt, or reye,
 A goddes kechil, or a trip of chese,
 Or elles what yow list, we may nat chese;
 A goddes halfpeny or a masse-peny,
 Or yeve us of your brawn, if ye have eny;
 A dagon of your blanket, leve dame,
 Our suster dere, lo! here I write your name;
 Bacon or beef, or swich thing as ye finde.'
 A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihinde,
 That was hir hostes man, and bar a sak,
 And what men yaf hem, leyde it on his bak.
 And whan that he was out at dore anon,
 He planed away the names everichon
 That he biforn had writen in his tables;
 He served hem with nyfles and with fables.
 'Nay, ther thou lixt, thou Somnour,' quod the Frere.
 'Pees,' quod our Host, 'for Cristes moder dere;
 Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at al.'
 So thryve I, quod this Somnour, so I shal.—
 So longe he wente hous by hous, til he
 Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be
 Refresshed more than in an hundred placis.
 Sik lay the gode man, whos that the place is;
 Bedrede up-on a couche lowe he lay.
 '*Deus hic*,' quod he, 'O Thomas, freend, good day,'
 Seyde this frere curteisly and softe.
 'Thomas,' quod he, 'god yelde yow! ful ofte
 Have I up-on this bench faren ful weel.
 Here have I eten many a mery meel';
 And fro the bench he droof away the cat,
 And leyde adoun his potente and his hat,
 And eek his scrippe, and sette him softe adoun.
 His felawe was go walked in-to toun,
 Forth with his knave, in-to that hostelrye
 Wher-as he shoop him thilke night to lye.
 'O dere maister,' quod this syke man,
 'How han ye fare sith that March bigan?
 I saugh yow noght this fourtenight or more.'
 'God woot,' quod he, 'laboured have I ful sore;
 And specially, for thy savacioun
 Have I seyd many a precious orisoun,
 And for our othere frendes, god hem blesse!
 I have to-day been at your chirche at messe,
 And seyd a sermon after my simple wit,
 Nat al after the text of holy writ;
 For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,
 And therefore wol I teche yow al the glose.
 Glosinge is a glorious thing, certeyn,
 For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkes seyn.
 Ther have I taught hem to be charitable,
 And spende hir good ther it is resonable,

And ther I saugh our dame; a! wher is she?'
 'Yond in the yerd I trowe that she be,'
 Seyde this man, 'and she wol come anon.'
 'Ey, maister! wel-come be ye, by seint Iohn!'
 Seyde this wyf, 'how fare ye hertely?'
 The frere aryseth up ful curteisly,
 And hir embraceth in his armes narwe,
 And kiste hir swete, and chirketh as a sparwe
 With his lippes: 'dame,' quod he, 'right weel,
 As he that is your servant every deel.
 Thanked be god, that yow yaf soule and lyf,
 Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf
 In al the chirche, god so save me!'
 'Ye, god amende defautes, sir,' quod she,
 'Algates wel-come be ye, by my fey!'
 'Graunt mercy, dame, this have I founde alwey.
 But of your grete goodnesse, by your leve,
 I wolde prey yow that ye nat yow greve,
 I wol with Thomas speke a litel throwe.
 Thise curats been ful necligent and slowe
 To grope tendrely a conscience.
 In shrift, in preching is my diligence,
 And studie in Petres wordes, and in Poules.
 I walke, and fische Cristen mennes soules,
 To yelden Iesu Crist his propre rente;
 To sprede his word is set al myn entente.'
 'Now, by your leve, o dere sir,' quod she,
 'Chydeth him weel, for seinte Trinitee.
 He is as angry as a pissemyre,
 Though that he have al that he can desyre.
 Though I him wrye a-night and make him warm,
 And on hym leye my leg outhur myn arm,
 He groneth lyk our boor, lyth in our sty.
 Other desport right noon of him have I;
 I may nat plesse him in no maner cas.'
 'O Thomas! *Ie vous dy*, Thomas! Thomas!
 This maketh the feend, this moste ben amended.
 Ire is a thing that hye god defended,
 And ther-of wol I speke a word or two.'
 'Now maister,' quod the wyf, 'er that I go,
 What wol ye dyne? I wol go ther-about.'
 'Now dame,' quod he, '*Ie vous dy sanz doute*,
 Have I nat of a capon but the livere,
 And of your softe breed nat but a shivere,
 And after that a rosted pigges heed,
 (But that I nolde no beest for me were deed),
 Thanne hadde I with yow hoonly suffisaunce.
 I am a man of litel sustenance.
 My spirit hath his fostring in the Bible.
 The body is ay so redy and penyble
 To wake, that my stomak is destroyed.
 I prey yow, dame, ye be nat anoyed,
 Though I so frendly yow my conseil shewe;
 By god, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe.'
 'Now, sir,' quod she, 'but o word er I go;

My child is deed with-inne thise wykes two,
 Sone after that ye wente out of this toun.
 'His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,
 Seith this frere, 'at hoom in our dortour.
 I dar wel seyn that, er that half an hour
 After his deeth, I saugh him born to blisse
 In myn avisioun, so god me wisse!
 So dide our sexteyn and our fermerer,
 That han been trewe freres fifty yeer;
 They may now, god be thanked of his lone,
 Maken hir Iubilee and walke allone.
 And up I roos, and al our covent eke,
 With many a tere triking on my cheke,
 Withouten noyse or clateringe of belles;
Te deum was our song and no-thing elles,
 Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,
 Thankinge him of his revelacioun.
 For sir and dame, trusteth me right weel,
 Our orisons been more effectueel,
 And more we seen of Cristes secree thinges
 Than burel folk, al-though they weren kinges.
 We live in povert and in abstinence,
 And burel folk in richesse and despence
 Of mete and drinke, and in hir foul delyt.
 We han this worldes lust al in despyt.
 Lazar and Dives liveden diversly,
 And diverse guerdon hadden they ther-by.
 Who-so wol preye, he moot faste and be clene,
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene.
 We fare as seith thapostle; cloth and fode
 Suffysen us, though they be nat ful gode.
 The clenness and the fastinge of us freres
 Maketh that Crist accepteth our preyes.
 Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty night
 Fasted, er that the heighe god of might
 Spak with him in the mountain of Sinay.
 With empty wombe, fastinge many a day,
 Receyved he the lawe that was writen
 With goddes finger; and Elie, wel ye witen,
 In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche
 With hye god, that is our lyves leche,
 He fasted longe and was in contemplaunce.
 Aaron, that hadde the temple in governaunce,
 And eek the othere preestes everichon,
 In-to the temple whan they sholde gon
 To preye for the peple, and do servyse,
 They nolden drinken, in no maner wyse,
 No drinke, which that mighte hem dronke make,
 But there in abstinence preye and wake,
 Lest that they deyden; tak heed what I seye.
 But they be sobre that for the peple preye,
 War that I seye,—namore! for it suffyseth.
 Our lord Iesu, as holy writ devyseth,
 Yaf us ensample of fastinge and preyes.
 Therfor we mendinants, we sely freres,

Been wedded to poverté and continence,
 To charitee, humblesse, and abstinence,
 To persecucion for rightwysnesse,
 To wepinge, misericorde, and clennessé.
 And therfor may ye see that our preyeres—
 I speke of us, we mendinants, we freres—
 Ben to the hye god more acceptable
 Than youre, with your festes at the table.
 Fro Paradys first, if I shal nat lye,
 Was man out chaced for his glotonye;
 And chaast was man in Paradys, certeyn.
 But herkne now, Thomas, what I shal seyn.
 I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,
 But I shall finde it in a maner glose,
 That specially our swete lord Iesus
 Spak this by freres, whan he seyde thus:
 "Blessed be they that povre in spirit been."
 And so forth al the gospel may ye seen,
 Wher it be lyker our professioun,
 Or hers that swimmen in possessioun.
 Fy on hir pompe and on hir glotonye!
 And for hir lewednesse I hem diffye.
 Me thinketh they ben lyk Iovinian,
 Fat as a whale, and walkinge as a swan;
 Al vinolent as botel in the spence.
 Hir preyer is of ful gret reverence;
 Whan they for soules seye the psalm of Davit,
 Lo, "bui!" they seye, "*cor meum eructavit!*"
 Who folweth Cristes gospel and his fore,
 But we that humble been and chast and pore,
 Werkers of goddes word, not auditours?
 Therfore, right as an hauk up, at a sours,
 Up springeth in-to their, right so prayeres
 Of charitable and chaste bisy freres
 Maken hir sours to goddes eres two.
 Thomas! Thomas! so mote I ryde or go,
 And by that lord that clepid is seint Yve,
 Nere thou our brother, sholdestou nat thryve!
 In our chapitre praye we day and night
 To Crist, that he thee sende hele and might,
 Thy body for to welden hastily.
 'God woot,' quod he, 'no-thing ther-of fele I;
 As help me Crist, as I, in fewe yeres,
 Han spended, up-on dyvers maner freres,
 Ful many a pound; yet fare I never the bet.
 Certeyn, my good have I almost biset.
 Farwel, my gold! for it is al ago!
 The frere answerde, 'O Thomas, dostow so?
 What nedeth yow diverse freres seche?
 What nedeth him that hath a parfit leche
 To sechen othere leches in the toun?
 Your inconstance is your confusioun.
 Holde ye than me, or elles our covent,
 To praye for yow ben insufficient?
 Thomas, that lape nis nat worth a myte;

Your maladye is for we han to lyte.
 "A! yif that covent half a quarter otes!"
 "A! yif that covent four and twenty grotes!"
 "A! yif that frere a peny, and lat him go!"
 Nay, nay, Thomas! it may no-thing be so.
 What is a ferthing worth parted in twelve?
 Lo, ech thing that is oned in him-selve
 Is more strong than whan it is to-scatered.
 Thomas, of me thou shalt nat been y-flatered;
 Thou woldest han our labour al for noght.
 The hye god, that al this world hath wrought,
 Seith that the werkman worthy is his hyre.
 Thomas! noght of your tresor I desyre
 As for my-self, but that al our covent
 To preye for yow is ay so diligent,
 And for to builden Cristes owene chirche.
 Thomas! if ye wol lernen for to wirche,
 Of buildinge up of chirches may ye finde
 If it be good, in Thomas lyf of Inde.
 Ye lye heer, ful of anger and of yre,
 With which the devel set your herte a-fyre,
 And chyden heer this sely innocent,
 Your wyf, that is so meke and pacient.
 And therfor, Thomas, trowe me if thee leste,
 Ne stryve nat with thy wyf, as for thy beste;
 And ber this word away now, by thy feith,
 Touchinge this thing, lo, what the wyse seith:
 "With-in thyn hous ne be thou no leoun;
 To thy subgits do noon oppressioun;
 Ne make thyne aqueyntances nat to flee."
 And Thomas, yet eft-sones I charge thee,
 Be war from hir that in thy bosom slepeth;
 War fro the serpent that so slyly crepeth
 Under the gras, and stingeth subtilly.
 Be war, my sone, and herkne paciently,
 That twenty thousand men han lost hir lyves,
 For stryving with hir lemmans and hir wyves.
 Now sith ye han so holy and meke a wyf,
 What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken stryf?
 Ther nis, y-wis, no serpent so cruel,
 Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so fel,
 As womman is, whan she hath caught an ire;
 Vengeance is thanne al that they desyre.
 Ire is a sinne, oon of the grete of sevene,
 Abhominable un-to the god of hevene;
 And to him-self it is destruccion.
 This every lewed viker or person
 Can seye, how Ire engendreth homicyde.
 Ire is, in sooth, executour of pryde.
 I coude of Ire seye so muche sorwe,
 My tale sholde laste til to-morwe.
 And therfor preye I god bothe day and night,
 An irous man, god sende him litel might!
 It is greet harm and, certes, gret pitee,
 To sette an irous man in heigh degree.

Whilom ther was an irous potestat,
As seith Senek, that, duringe his estaat,
Up-on a day out riden knightes two,
And as fortune wolde that it were so,
That oon of hem cam hoom, that other noght.
Anon the knight bifore the Iuge is broght,
That seyde thus, 'thou hast thy felawe slayn,
For which I deme thee to the deeth, certayn.'
And to another knight comanded he,
'Go lede him to the deeth, I charge thee.'
And happed, as they wente by the weye
Toward the place ther he sholde deye,
The knight cam, which men wenden had be deed.
Thanne thoughte they, it was the beste reed,
To lede hem bothe to the Iuge agayn.
They seiden, 'lord, the knight ne hath nat slayn
His felawe; here he standeth hool alyve.'
'Ye shul be deed,' quod he, 'so moot I thryve!
That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and three!'
And to the firste knight right thus spak he,
'I dampned thee, thou most algate be deed.
And thou also most nedes lese thyn heed,
For thou art cause why thy felawe deyth.'
And to the thridde knight right thus he seyth,
'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee.'
And thus he dide don sleen hem alle three.
Irous Cambyses was eek dronkelewe,
And ay delyted him to been a shrewe.
And so bifel, a lord of his meynce,
That lovede vertuous moralitee,
Seyde on a day bitwix hem two right thus:
'A lord is lost, if he be vicious;
And dronkenesse is eek a foul record
Of any man, and namely in a lord.
Ther is ful many an eye and many an ere
Awaiting on a lord, and he noot where.
For goddes love, drink more attemprely;
Wyn maketh man to lesen wrecchedly
His minde, and eek his limes everichon.'
'The revers shaltou se,' quod he, 'anon;
And preve it, by thyn owene experience,
That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich offence.
Ther is no wyn bireveth me my might
Of hand ne foot, ne of myn eyen sight'—
And, for despyt, he drank ful muchel more
An hondred part than he had doon bifore;
And right anon, this irous cursed wrecche
Leet this knightes sone bifore him fecche,
Comandinge him he sholde bifore him stonde.
And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde,
And up the streng he pulled to his ere,
And with an arwe he slow the child right there:
'Now whether have I a siker hand or noon?'
Quod he, 'is al my might and minde agoon?
Hath wyn bireved me myn eyen sight?'

What sholde I telle thanswere of the knight?
 His sone was slayn, ther is na-more to seye.
 Beth war therfor with lordes how ye pleye.
 Singeth *Placebo*, and I shal, if I can,
 But if it be un-to a povre man.
 To a povre man men sholde hise vyces telle,
 But nat to a lord, thogh he sholde go to helle.
 Lo irous Cirus, thilke Percien,
 How he destroyed the river of Gysen,
 For that an hors of his was dreynt ther-inne,
 Whan that he wente Babiloigne to winne.
 He made that the river was so smal,
 That wommen mighte wade it over al.
 Lo, what seyde he, that so wel teche can?
 "Ne be no felawe to an irous man,
 Ne with no wood man walke by the weye,
 Lest thee repente;" ther is na-more to seye.
 Now Thomas, leve brother, lef thyn ire;
 Thou shall me finde as lust as is a squire.
 Hold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn herte;
 Thyn angre dooth thee al to sore smerte;
 But shewe to me al thy confessioun.'
 'Nay,' quod the syke man, 'by Seint Simoun!
 I have be shriven this day at my curat;
 I have him told al hoolly myn estat;
 Nedeth na-more to speke of it,' seith he,
 'But if me list of myn humilitee.'
 'Yif me thanne of thy gold, to make our cloistre,'
 Quod he, 'for many a muscle and many an oistre,
 Whan other men han ben ful wel at eyse,
 Hath been our fode, our cloistre for to reyse.
 And yet, god woot, unnethe the fundement
 Parfourned is, ne of our pavement
 Nis nat a tyle yet with-inne our wones;
 By god, we owen fourty pound for stones!
 Now help, Thomas, for him that harwed helle!
 For elles moste we our bokes selle.
 And if ye lakke our predicacioun,
 Than gooth the world al to destruccioun.
 For who-so wolde us fro this world bireve,
 So god me save, Thomas, by your leve,
 He wolde bireve out of this world the sonne.
 For who can teche and werchen as we conne?
 And that is nat of litel tyme,' quod he;
 'But sith that Elie was, or Elisee,
 Han freres been, that finde I of record,
 In charitee, y-thanked be our lord.
 Now Thomas, help, for seinte charitee!'
 And doun anon he sette him on his knee.
 This syke man wex wel ny wood for ire;
 He wolde that the frere had been on-fire
 With his false dissimulacioun.
 'Swich thing as is in my possessioun,'
 Quod he, 'that may I yeven, and non other.
 Ye sey me thus, how that I am your brother?'

'Ye, certes,' quod the frere, 'trusteth weel;
I took our dame our lettre with our seel.'
'Now wel,' quod he, 'and som-what shal I yive
Un-to your holy covent whyl I live,
And in thyn hand thou shalt it have anoon;
On this condicioun, and other noon,
That thou departe it so, my dere brother,
That every frere have also muche as other.
This shaltou swere on thy professioun,
With-outen fraude or cavillacioun.'
'I swere it,' quod this frere, 'upon my feith!
And ther-with-al his hand in his he leith:
'Lo, heer my feith! in me shal be no lak.'
'Now thanne, put thyn hand down by my bak,'
Seyde this man, 'and grope wel bihinde;
Bynethe my buttoke ther shaltow finde
A thing that I have hid in privetee.'
'A!' thoghte this frere, 'this shal go with me!
And doun his hand he launcheth to the clifte,
In hope for to finde ther a yifte.
And whan this syke man felte this frere
Aboute his tuwel grope there and here,
Amidde his hand he leet the frere a fart.
Ther nis no capul, drawinge in a cart,
That mighte have lete a fart of swich a soun.
'The frere up stirte as doth a wood leoun:
'A! false cherl,' quod he, 'for goddes bones,
This hastow for despyt doon, for the nones!
Thou shalt abyge this fart, if that I may!'
His meynnee, whiche that herden this affray,
Cam lepinge in, and chaced out the frere;
And forth he gooth, with a ful angry chere,
And fette his felawe, ther-as lay his stoor.
He looked as it were a wilde boor;
He grinte with his teeth, so was he wrooth.
A sturdy pas doun to the court he gooth,
Wher-as ther woned a man of greet honour,
To whom that he was alwey confessour;
This worthy man was lord of that village.
This frere cam, as he were in a rage,
Wher-as this lord sat eting at his bord.
Unnethes mighte the frere speke a word,
Til atte laste he seyde: 'god yow see!'
This lord gan loke, and seide, '*benedicite!*
What, frere Iohn, what maner world is this?
I see wel that som thing ther is amis.
Ye loken as the wode were ful of thevis,
Sit doun anon, and tel me what your greef is,
And it shal been amended, if I may.'
'I have,' quod he, 'had a despyt this day,
God yelde yow! adoun in your village,
That in this world is noon so povre a page,
That he nolde have abhominacioun
Of that I have receyved in your toun.
And yet ne greveth me no-thing so sore,

As that this olde cherl, with lokkes hore,
 Blasphemed hath our holy covent eke.
 'Now, maister,' quod this lord, 'I yow biseke.'
 'No maister, sire,' quod he, 'but servitour,
 Thogh I have had in scole swich honour.
 God lyketh nat that "Raby" men us calle,
 Neither in market ne in your large halle.'
 'No fors,' quod he, 'but tel me al your grief.'
 'Sire,' quod this frere, 'an odious meschief
 This day bitid is to myn ordre and me,
 And so *per consequens* to ech degree
 Of holy chirche, god amende it sone!'
 'Sir,' quod the lord, 'ye woot what is to done.
 Distempre yow noght, ye be my confessour;
 Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour.
 For goddes love your pacience ye holde;
 Tel me your grief:' and he anon him tolde,
 As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.
 The lady of the hous ay stille sat,
 Til she had herd al what the frere sayde:
 'Ey, goddes moder,' quod she, 'blisful mayde!
 Is ther oght elles? telle me faithfully.'
 'Madame,' quod he, 'how thinketh yow her-by?'
 'How that me thinketh?' quod she; 'so god me speede,
 I seye, a cherl hath doon a cherles dede.
 What shold I seye? god lat him never thee!
 His syke heed is ful of vanitee,
 I hold him in a maner frenesye.'
 'Madame,' quod he, 'by god I shal nat lye;
 But I on other weyes may be wreke,
 I shal diffame him over-al ther I speke,
 This false blasphemour, that charged me
 To parte that wol nat departed be,
 To every man y-liche, with meschaunce!'
 The lord sat stille as he were in a traunce,
 And in his herte he rolled up and down,
 'How hadde this cherl imaginacioun
 To shewe swich a probleme to the frere?
 Never erst er now herde I of swich matere;
 I trowe the devel putte it in his minde.
 In ars-metryke shal ther no man finde,
 Biforn this day, of swich a questioun.
 Who sholde make a demonstracioun,
 That every man sholde have y-liche his part
 As of the soun or savour of a fart?
 O nyce proude cherl, I shrewe his face!
 Lo, sires,' quod the lord, with harde grace,
 'Who ever herde of swich a thing er now?
 To every man y-lyke? tel me how?
 It is an impossible, it may nat be!
 Ey, nyce cherl, god lete him never thee!
 The rumblinge of a fart, and every soun,
 Nis but of eir reverberacioun,
 And ever it wasteth lyte and lyte away.
 Ther is no man can demen, by my fey,

If that it were departed equally.
What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewedly
Un-to my confessour to-day he spak!
I holde him certeyn a demoniak!
Now ete your mete, and lat the cherl go pleye,
Lat him go honge himself a devel weye!
Now stood the lordes squyer at the bord,
That carf his mete, and herde, word by word,
Of alle thinges of which I have yow sayd.
'My lord,' quod he, 'be ye nat yvel apayd;
I coude telle, for a goune-clooth,
To yow, sir frere, so ye be nat wrooth,
How that this fart sholde even deled be
Among your covent, if it lyked me.'
'Tel,' quod the lord, 'and thou shall have anon
A goune-cloth, by god and by Seint Iohn!'
'My lord,' quod he, 'whan that the weder is fair,
With-outen wind or perturbinge of air,
Lat bringe a cartwheel here in-to this halle,
But loke that it have his spokes alle.
Twelf spokes hath a cartwheel comunly.
And bring me than twelf freres, woot ye why?
For thrittene is a covent, as I gesse.
The confessour heer, for his worthinesse,
Shal parfourne up the nombre of his covent.
Than shal they knele doun, by oon assent,
And to every spokes ende, in this manere,
Ful sadly leye his nose shal a frere.
Your noble confessour, ther god him save,
Shal holde his nose upright, under the nave.
Than shal this cherl, with bely stif and toght
As any tabour, hider been y-broght;
And sette him on the wheel right of this cart,
Upon the nave, and make him lete a fart.
And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,
By preve which that is demonstratif,
That equally the soun of it wol wende,
And eek the stink, un-to the spokes ende;
Save that this worthy man, your confessour,
By-cause he is a man of greet honour,
Shal have the firste fruit, as reson is;
The noble usage of freres yet is this,
The worthy men of hem shul first be served;
And certainly, he hath it weel deserved.
He hath to-day taught us so muchel good
With preching in the pulpit ther he stood,
That I may vouche-sauf, I sey for me,
He hadde the firste smel of fartes three,
And so wolde al his covent hardily;
He bereth him so faire and holily.'
The lord, the lady, and ech man, save the frere,
Seyde that Iankin spak, in this matere,
As wel as Euclide or [as] Ptholomee.
Touchinge this cherl, they seyde, subtiltee
And heigh wit made him speken as he spak;

He nis no fool, ne no demoniak.
 And Iankin hath y-wonne a newe goune.—
 My tale is doon; we been almost at tounē.
Here endeth the Somnours Tale.

THE CLERK'S PROLOGUE.

Here folweth the Prologe of the Clerkes Tale of Oxenford.

'Sir clerk of Oxenford,' our hoste sayde,
 'Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a mayde,
 Were newe spoused, sitting at the bord;
 This day ne herde I of your tonge a word.
 I trowe ye studie aboute som sophyme,
 But Salomon seith, "every thing hath tyme."
 For goddes sake, as beth of bettre chere,
 It is no tyme for to studien here.
 Telle us som mery tale, by your fey;
 For what man that is entred in a pley,
 He nedes moot unto the pley assente.
 But precheth nat, as freres doon in Lente,
 To make us for our olde sinnes wepe,
 Ne that thy tale make us nat to slepe.
 Telle us som mery thing of adventures;—
 Your termes, your colours, and your figures,
 Kepe hem in stoor til so be ye endyte
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kinges wryte.
 Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, I yow preye,
 That we may understonde what ye seye.'
 This worthy clerk benignely answerde,
 'Hoste,' quod he, 'I am under your yerde;
 Ye han of us as now the governaunce,
 And therfor wol I do yow obeisaunce,
 As fer as reson axeth, hardily.
 I wol yow telle a tale which that I
 Lerned at Padowe of a worthy clerk,
 As preved by his wordes and his werk.
 He is now deed and nayled in his cheste,
 I prey to god so yeve his soule reste!
 Fraunceys Petrark, the laureat poete,
 Highte this clerk, whos rethoryke sweete
 Enlumined al Itaille of poetrye,
 As Linian dide of philosophye
 Or lawe, or other art particuler;
 But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer
 But as it were a twinkling of an yë,
 Hem bothe hath slayn, and alle shul we dyë.
 But forth to tellen of this worthy man,
 That taughte me this tale, as I bigan,
 I seye that first with heigh style he endyteth,
 Er he the body of his tale wryteth,
 A proheme, in the which discryveth he
 Pemond, and of Saluces the contree,
 And speketh of Apennyn, the hilles hye,
 That been the boundes of West Lombardye,
 And of Mount Vesulus in special,

Where as the Poo, out of a welle smal,
 Taketh his firste springing and his sours,
 That estward ay encresseth in his cours
 To Emelward, to Ferrare, and Venyse:
 The which a long thing were to devyse.
 And trewely, as to my Iugement,
 Me thinketh it a thing impertinent,
 Save that he wol convey en his matere:
 But this his tale, which that ye may here.'

THE CLERKES TALE.

Here biginneth the Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford.

Ther is, at the west syde of Itaille,
 Doun at the rote of Vesulus the colde,
 A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,
 Wher many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde,
 That founded were in tyme of fadres olde,
 And many another delitable sighte,
 And Saluces this noble contree highte.
 A markis whylom lord was of that londe,
 As were his worthy eldres him bifore;
 And obeisant and redy to his honde
 Were alle his liges, bothe lasse and more.
 Thus in delyt he liveth, and hath don yore,
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of fortune,
 Bothe of his lordes and of his commune.
 Therwith he was, to speke as of linage,
 The gentilleste y-born of Lumbardye,
 A fair persone, and strong, and yong of age,
 And ful of honour and of curteisye;
 Discreet y-nogh his contree for to gye,
 Save in somme thinges that he was to blame,
 And Walter was this yonge lordes name.
 I blame him thus, that he considereth noght
 In tyme cominge what mighte him bityde,
 But on his lust present was al his thoght,
 As for to hauke and hunte on every syde;
 Wel ny alle othere cures leet he slyde,
 And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,
 Wedde no wyf, for noght that may bifalle.
 Only that point his peple bar so sore,
 That flokmele on a day they to him wente,
 And oon of hem, that wysest was of lore,
 Or elles that the lord best wolde assente
 That he sholde telle him what his peple mente,
 Or elles coude he shewe wel swich matere,
 He to the markis seyde as ye shul here.
 'O noble markis, your humanitee
 Assureth us and yeveth us hardinesse,
 As ofte as tyme is of necessitee
 That we to yow mowe telle our hevinesse;
 Accepteth, lord, now for your gentillesse,
 That we with pitous herte un-to yow pleyne,
 And lete your eres nat my voys disdeyne.

Al have I noght to done in this matere
 More than another man hath in this place,
 Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so dere,
 Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,
 I dar the better aske of yow a space
 Of audience, to shewen our requeste,
 And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste.
 For certes, lord, so wel us lyketh yow
 And al your werk and ever han doon, that we
 Ne coude nat us self devysen how
 We mighte liven in more felicitee,
 Save o thing, lord, if it your wille be,
 That for to been a wedded man yow leste,
 Than were your peple in sovereyn hertes reste.
 Boweth your nekke under that blisful yok
 Of soveraynetee, noght of servyse,
 Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok;
 And thenketh, lord, among your thoghtes wyse,
 How that our dayes passe in sondry wyse;
 For though we slepe or wake, or rome, or ryde,
 Ay fleeth the tyme, it nil no man abyde.
 And though your grene youthe floure as yit,
 In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,
 And deeth manaceth every age, and smit
 In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon:
 And al so certein as we knowe echoon
 That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle
 Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle.
 Accepteth than of us the trewe entente,
 That never yet refuseden your heste,
 And we wol, lord, if that ye wol assente,
 Chese yow a wyf in short tyme, atte leste,
 Born of the gentilleste and of the meste
 Of al this lond, so that it oghte seme
 Honour to god and yow, as we can deme.
 Deliver us out of al this bisy drede,
 And tak a wyf, for hye goddes sake;
 For if it so bifelle, as god forbede,
 That thurgh your deeth your linage sholde slake,
 And that a straunge successour sholde take
 Your heritage, o! wo were us alyve!
 Wherfor we pray you hastily to wyve.
 Hir meke preyere and hir pitous chere
 Made the markis herte han pitee.
 'Ye wol,' quod he, 'myn owene peple dere,
 To that I never erst thoghte streyne me.
 I me reioysed of my libertee,
 That selde tyme is founde in mariage;
 Ther I was free, I moot been in servage.
 But nathelees I see your trewe entente,
 And truste upon your wit, and have don ay;
 Wherfor of my free wil I wol assente
 To wedde me, as sone as ever I may.
 But ther-as ye han profred me to-day
 To chese me a wyf, I yow relese

That choys, and prey yow of that profre cesse.
 For god it woot, that children ofte been
 Unlyk her worthy eldres hem bifore;
 Bountee comth al of god, nat of the streen
 Of which they been engendred and y-bore;
 I truste in goddes bountee, and therfore
 My mariage and myn estaat and reste
 I him bitake; he may don as him leste.
 Lat me alone in chesinge of my wyf,
 That charge up-on my bak I wol endure;
 But I yow preye, and charge up-on your lyf,
 That what wyf that I take, ye me assure
 To worshipe hir, whyl that hir lyf may dure,
 In word and werk, bothe here and everywhere,
 As she an emperoures doghter were.
 And forthermore, this shal ye swere, that ye
 Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve;
 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee
 At your requeste, as ever moot I thryve,
 Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve;
 And but ye wole assente in swich manere,
 I prey yow, speketh na-more of this matere.
 With hertly wil they sworn, and assenten
 To al this thing, ther seyde no wight nay;
 Bisekinge him of grace, er that they wenten,
 That he wolde graunten hem a certein day
 Of his spousaille, as sone as ever he may;
 For yet alwey the peple som-what dredde
 Lest that this markis no wyf wolde wedde.
 He graunted hem a day, swich as him leste,
 On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,
 And seyde, he dide al this at hir requeste;
 And they, with humble entente, buxomly,
 Knelinge up-on her knees ful reverently
 Him thanken alle, and thus they han an ende
 Of hir entente, and hoom agayn they wende.
 And heer-up-on he to his officeres
 Comaundeth for the feste to purveye,
 And to his privee knightes and squyeres
 Swich charge yaf, as him liste on hem leye;
 And they to his comandement obeye,
 And ech of hem doth al his diligence
 To doon un-to the feste reverence.

Explicit prima pars. Incipit secunda pars.

Noght fer fro thilke paleys honourable
 Ther-as this markis shoop his mariage,
 Ther stood a throp, of site delitable,
 In which that povre folk of that village
 Hadden hir bestes and hir herbergage,
 And of hir labour took hir sustenance
 After that the erthe yaf hem habundance.
 Amonges thise povre folk ther dwelte a man
 Which that was holden povrest of hem alle;
 But hye god som tyme senden can
 His grace in-to a litel oxes stalle:

Ianicula men of that throp him calle.
 A doghter hadde he, fair y-nogh to sighte,
 And Grisildis this yonge mayden highte.
 But for to speke of vertuous beautee,
 Than was she oon the faireste under sonne;
 For povreliche y-fostred up was she,
 No likerous lust was thurgh hir herte y-ronne;
 Wel offer of the welle than of the tonne
 She drank, and for she wolde vertu plese,
 She knew wel labour, but non ydel ese.
 But thogh this mayde tendre were of age,
 Yet in the brest of hir virginitee
 Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage;
 And in greet reverence and charitee
 Hir olde povre fader fostred she;
 A fewe sheep spinning on feeld she kepte,
 She wolde noght been ydel til she slepte.
 And whan she hoomward cam, she wolde bringe
 Wortes or othere herbes tymes ofte,
 The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir livinge,
 And made hir bed ful harde and no-thing softe;
 And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte
 With everich obeisaunce and diligence
 That child may doon to fadres reverence.
 Up-on Grisilde, this povre creature,
 Ful ofte sythe this markis sette his yē
 As he on hunting rood paraventure;
 And whan it fil that he mighte hir espye,
 He noght with wantoun loking of folye
 His yēn caste on hir, but in sad wyse
 Up-on hir chere he wolde him ofte avyse,
 Commending in his herte hir wommanhede,
 And eek hir vertu, passing any wight
 Of so yong age, as wel in chere as dede.
 For thogh the peple have no greet insight
 In vertu, he considered ful right
 Hir bountee, and disposed that he wolde
 Wedde hir only, if ever he wedde sholde.
 The day of wedding cam, but no wight can
 Telle what womman that it sholde be;
 For which merveille wondred many a man,
 And seyden, whan they were in privetee,
 'Wol nat our lord yet leve his vanitee?
 Wol he nat wedde? allas, allas the whyle!
 Why wol he thus him-self and us bigyle?'
 But natheles this markis hath don make
 Of gemmes, set in gold and in asure,
 Broches and ringes, for Grisildis sake,
 And of hir clothing took he the mesure
 By a mayde, lyk to hir stature,
 And eek of othere ornamentes alle
 That un-to swich a wedding sholde falle.
 The tyme of undern of the same day
 Approcheth, that this wedding sholde be;
 And al the paleys put was in array,

Bothe halle and chambres, ech in his degree;
Houses of office stuffed with plentee
Ther maystow seen of deyntevous vitaille,
That may be founde, as fer as last Itaille.
This royal markis, richely arrayed,
Lordes and ladyes in his companye,
The whiche unto the feste were y-prayed,
And of his retenue the bachelrye,
With many a soun of sondry melodye,
Un-to the village, of the which I tolde,
In this array the righte wey han holde.
Grisilde of this, god woot, ful innocent,
That for hir shapen was al this array,
To fecchen water at a welle is went,
And cometh hoom as sone as ever she may.
For wel she hadde herd seyde, that thilke day
The markis sholde wedde, and, if she mighte,
She wolde fayn han seyn som of that sighte.
She thoghte, 'I wol with othere maydens stonde,
That been my felawes, in our dore, and see
The markisesse, and therfor wol I fonde
To doon at hoom, as sone as it may be,
The labour which that longeth un-to me;
And than I may at leyser hir biholde,
If she this wey un-to the castel holde.'
And as she wolde over hir threshfold goon,
The markis cam and gan hir for to calle;
And she sette down hir water-pot anoon
Bisyde the threshfold, in an oxes stalle,
And down up-on hir knees she gan to falle,
And with sad contenance kneleth stille
Til she had herd what was the lordes wille.
This thoughtful markis spak un-to this mayde
Ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere,
'Wher is your fader, Grisildis?' he sayde,
And she with reverence, in humble chere,
Answerde, 'lord, he is al redy here.'
And in she gooth with-outen lenger lette,
And to the markis she hir fader fette.
He by the hond than took this olde man,
And seyde thus, whan he him hadde asyde,
'Ianicula, I neither may ne can
Lenger the plesance of myn herte hyde.
If that thou vouche-sauf, what-so bityde,
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,
As for my wyf, un-to hir lyves ende.
Thou lovest me, I woot it wel, certeyn,
And art my feithful lige man y-bore;
And al that lyketh me, I dar wel seyn
It lyketh thee, and specially therfore
Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,
If that thou wolt un-to that purpos drawe,
To take me as for thy sone-in-lawe?'
This sodeyn cas this man astoned so,
That reed he wex, abayst, and al quaking

He stood unnethes seyde he wordes mo,
 But only thus: 'lord,' quod he, 'my willing
 Is as ye wole, ne ayeines your lyking
 I wol no-thing; ye be my lord so dere;
 Right as yow lust governeth this matere.'
 'Yet wol I,' quod this markis softly,
 'That in thy chambre I and thou and she
 Have a collacion, and wostow why?
 For I wol axe if it hir wille be
 To be my wyf, and reule hir after me;
 And al this shal be doon in thy presence,
 I wol noght speke out of thyn audience.'
 And in the chambre whyl they were aboute
 Hir tretis, which as ye shal after here,
 The peple cam un-to the hous with-oute,
 And wondred hem in how honest manere
 And tentifly she kepte hir fader dere.
 But outerly Grisildis wondre mighte,
 For never erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.
 No wonder is thogh that she were astoned
 To seen so greet a gest come in that place;
 She never was to swiche gestes woned,
 For which she loked with ful pale face.
 But shortly forth this tale for to chace,
 Thise arn the wordes that the markis sayde
 To this benigne verray feithful mayde.
 'Grisilde,' he seyde, 'ye shul wel understonde
 It lyketh to your fader and to me
 That I yow wedde, and eek it may so stonde,
 As I suppose, ye wol that it so be.
 But thise demandes axe I first,' quod he,
 'That, sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,
 Wol ye assente, or elles yow avyse?
 I seye this, be ye redy with good herte
 To al my lust, and that I frely may,
 As me best thinketh, do yow laughe or smerte,
 And never ye to grucche it, night ne day?
 And eek whan I sey "ye," ne sey nat "nay,"
 Neither by word ne frowning contenance;
 Swer this, and here I swere our alliance.'
 Wondring upon this word, quaking for drede,
 She seyde, 'lord, undigne and unworthy
 Am I to thilke honour that ye me bede;
 But as ye wol your-self, right so wol I.
 And heer I swere that never willingly
 In werk ne thoght I nil yow disobeye,
 For to be deed, though me were looth to deye.'
 'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn!' quod he.
 And forth he gooth with a ful sobre chere
 Out at the dore, and after that cam she,
 And to the peple he seyde in this manere,
 'This is my wyf,' quod he, 'that standeth here.
 Honoureth hir, and loveth hir, I preye,
 Who-so me loveth; ther is na-more to seye.'
 And for that no-thing of hir olde gere

She sholde bringe in-to his hous, he bad
That wommen sholde dispoilen hir right there;
Of which thise ladyes were nat right glad
To handle hir clothes wher-in she was clad.
But natheles this mayde bright of hewe
Fro foot to heed they clothed han al newe.
Hir heres han they kembd, that lay untressed
Ful rudely, and with hir fingres smale
A corone on hir heed they han y-dressed,
And sette hir ful of nowches grete and smale;
Of hir array what sholde I make a tale?
Unnethe the peple hir knew for hir fairnesse,
Whan she translated was in swich richesse.
This markis hath hir spoused with a ring
Brought for the same cause, and than hir sette
Up-on an hors, snow-whyte and wel ambling,
And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,
With Ioyful peple that hir ladde and mette,
Conveyed hir, and thus the day they spende
In revel, til the sonne gan descende.
And shortly forth this tale for to chace,
I seye that to this newe markisesse
God hath swich favour sent hir of his grace,
That it ne semed nat by lyknesse
That she was born and fed in rudenesse,
As in a cote or in an oxe-stalle,
But norished in an emperoures halle.
To every wight she woxen is so dere
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore
And from hir birthe knewe hir yeer by yeer,
Unnethe trowed they, but dorste han swore
That to Ianicle, of which I spak bifore,
She doghter nas, for, as by coniecture,
Hem thoughte she was another creature.
For thogh that ever vertuous was she,
She was encreased in swich excellence
Of thewes gode, y-set in heigh bountee,
And so discreet and fair of eloquence,
So benigne and so digne of reverence,
And coude so the peples herte embrace,
That ech hir lovede that loked on hir face.
Noght only of Saluces in the toun
Publiced was the bountee of hir name,
But eek bisyde in many a regioun,
If oon seyde wel, another seyde the same;
So spradde of hir heigh bountee the fame,
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,
Gon to Saluce, upon hir to biholde.
Thus Walter lowly, nay but royally,
Wedded with fortunat honestetee,
In goddes pees liveth ful esily
At hoom, and outward grace y-nogh had he;
And for he saugh that under low degree
Was ofte vertu hid, the peple him helde
A prudent man, and that is seyn ful selde.

Nat only this Grisildis thurgh hir wit
 Coude al the feet of wyfly hoomlinesse,
 But eek, whan that the cas requyred it,
 The commune profit coude she redresse.
 Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevinesse
 In al that lond, that she ne coude apese,
 And wysly bringe hem alle in reste and ese.
 Though that hir housbonde absent were anoon,
 If gentil men, or othere of hir contree
 Were wrothe, she wolde bringen hem atoon;
 So wyse and rype wordes hadde she,
 And Iugements of so greet equitee,
 That she from heven sent was, as men wende,
 Peple to save and every wrong tamende.
 Nat longe tyme after that this Grisild
 Was wedded, she a doughter hath y-bore,
 Al had hir lever have born a knave child.
 Glad was this markis and the folk therfore;
 For though a mayde child come al bifore,
 She may unto a knave child atteyne
 By lyklihed, sin she nis nat bareyne.

Explicit secunda pars. Incipit tercia pars.

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymes mo,
 Whan that this child had souked but a throwe,
 This markis in his herte longeth so
 To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,
 That he ne mighte out of his herte throwe
 This merveillous desyr, his wyf tassaye,
 Needless, god woot, he thoughte hir for taffraye.
 He hadde assayed hir y-nogh bifore,
 And fond hir ever good; what neded it
 Hir for to tempte and alwey more and more?
 Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,
 But as for me, I seye that yvel it sit
 Tassaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,
 And putten her in anguish and in drede.
 For which this markis wroghte in this manere;
 He cam alone a-night, ther as she lay,
 With sterne face and with ful trouble chere,
 And seyde thus, 'Grisild,' quod he, 'that day
 That I yow took out of your povre array,
 And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse,
 Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse.
 I seye, Grisild, this present dignitee,
 In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,
 Maketh yow nat foryetful for to be
 That I yow took in povre estaat ful lowe
 For any wele ye moot your-selven knowe.
 Tak hede of every word that I yow seye,
 Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye.
 Ye woot your-self wel, how that ye cam here
 In-to this hous, it is nat longe ago,
 And though to me that ye be lief and dere,
 Un-to my gentils ye be no-thing so;
 They seyn, to hem it is greet shame and wo

For to be subgetys and ben in servage
To thee, that born art of a smal village.
And namely, sith thy doghter was y-bore,
Thise wordes han they spoken doutelees;
But I desyre, as I have doon bifore,
To live my lyf with hem in reste and pees;
I may nat in this caas be recchelees.
I moot don with thy doghter for the beste,
Nat as I wolde, but as my peple leste.
And yet, god wot, this is ful looth to me;
But nathelees with-oute your witing
I wol nat doon, but this wol I,' quod he,
'That ye to me assente as in this thing.
Shewe now your pacience in your werking
That ye me highte and swore in your village
That day that maked was our mariage.'
Whan she had herd al this, she noght ameved
Neither in word, or chere, or countenaunce;
For, as it semed, she was nat agreved:
She seyde, 'lord, al lyth in your plesaunce,
My child and I with hertly obeisaunce
Ben youres al, and ye mowe save or spille
Your owene thing; werketh after your wille.
Ther may no-thing, god so my soule save,
Lyken to yow that may displese me;
Ne I desyre no-thing for to have,
Ne drede for to lese, save only ye;
This wil is in myn herte and ay shal be.
No lengthe of tyme or deeth may this deface,
Ne chaunge my corage to another place.'
Glad was this markis of hir answering,
But yet he feyned as he were nat so;
Al drery was his chere and his loking
Whan that he sholde out of the chambre go.
Sone after this, a furlong wey or two,
He prively hath told al his entente
Un-to a man, and to his wyf him sente.
A maner sergeant was this privee man,
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde
In thinges grete, and eek swich folk wel can
Don execucioun on thinges badde.
The lord knew wel that he him loved and dradde;
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordes wille,
In-to the chambre he stalked him ful stille.
'Madame,' he seyde, 'ye mote foryeve it me,
Thogh I do thing to which I am constreyned;
Ye ben so wys that ful wel knowe ye
That lordes hestes mowe nat been y-feyned;
They mowe wel been biwailed or compleyned,
But men mot nede un-to her lust obeye,
And so wol I; ther is na-more to seye.
This child I am comanded for to take'—
And spak na-more, but out the child he hente
Despitously, and gan a chere make
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.

Grisildis mot al suffren and consente;
 And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,
 And leet this cruel sergeant doon his wille.
 Suspicious was the diffame of this man,
 Suspect his face, suspect his word also;
 Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan.
 Allas! hir doghter that she lovede so
 She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho.
 But natheles she neither weep ne syked,
 Consenting hir to that the markis lyked.
 But atte laste speken she bigan,
 And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,
 So as he was a worthy gentil man,
 That she moste kisse hir child er that it deyde;
 And in her barm this litel child she leyde
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to kisse
 And lulled it, and after gan it blisse.
 And thus she seyde in hir benigne voys,
 'Far weel, my child; I shal thee never see;
 But, sith I thee have marked with the croys,
 Of thilke fader blessed mote thou be,
 That for us deyde up-on a croys of tree.
 Thy soule, litel child, I him bitake,
 For this night shaltow dyen for my sake.'
 I trowe that to a norice in this cas
 It had ben hard this rewthe for to se;
 Wel mighte a mooder than han cryed 'allas!'
 But nathelees so sad stedfast was she,
 That she endured all adversitee,
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,
 'Have heer agayn your litel yonge mayde.
 Goth now,' quod she, 'and dooth my lordes heste,
 But o thing wol I preye yow of your grace,
 That, but my lord forbad yow, atte leste
 Burieth this litel body in som place
 That bestes ne no briddes it to-race.'
 But he no word wol to that purpos seye,
 But took the child and wente upon his weye.
 This sergeant cam un-to his lord ageyn,
 And of Grisildis wordes and hir chere
 He tolde him point for point, in short and playn,
 And him presenteth with his doghter dere.
 Somwhat this lord hath rewthe in his manere;
 But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille,
 As lordes doon, whan they wol han hir wille;
 And bad his sergeant that he prively
 Sholde this child ful softe winde and wrappe
 With alle circumstances tendrely,
 And carie it in a cofre or in a lappe;
 But, up-on payne his heed of for to swappe,
 That no man sholde knowe of his entente,
 Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente;
 But at Boloigne to his suster dere,
 That thilke tyme of Panik was countesse,
 He sholde it take, and shewe hir this matere,

Biseking hir to don hir businesse
 This child to fostre in alle gentillesse;
 And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde
 From every wight, for oght that may bityde.
 The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this thing;
 But to this markis now retourne we;
 For now goth he ful faste imagining
 If by his wyves chere he mighte see,
 Or by hir word aperceyve that she
 Were chaunged; but he never hir coude finde
 But ever in oon y-lyke sad and kinde.
 As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,
 And eek in love as she was wont to be,
 Was she to him in every maner wyse;
 Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she.
 Non accident for noon adversitee
 Was seyn in hir, ne never hir doghter name
 Ne nempned she, in ernest nor in game.

Explicit tercia pars. Sequitur pars quarta.

In this estaat ther passed been foure yeer
 Er she with childe was; but, as god wolde,
 A knave child she bar by this Walter,
 Ful gracious and fair for to biholde.
 And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,
 Nat only he, but al his contree, merie
 Was for this child, and god they thanke and herie.
 Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the brest
 Departed of his norice, on a day
 This markis caughte yet another lest
 To tempte his wyf yet ofter, if he may.
 O needles was she tempted in assay!
 But wedded men ne knowe no mesure,
 Whan that they finde a pacient creature.
 'Wyf,' quod this markis, 'ye han herd er this,
 My peple sikly berth our mariage,
 And namely, sith my sone y-boren is,
 Now is it worse than ever in al our age.
 The murmur sleeth myn herte and my corage;
 For to myne eres comth the voys so smerte,
 That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte.
 Now sey they thus, "whan Walter is agoon,
 Then shal the blood of Ianicle succede
 And been our lord, for other have we noon;"
 Swiche wordes seith my peple, out of drede.
 Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken hede;
 For certainly I drede swich sentence,
 Though they nat pleyn speke in myn audience.
 I wolde live in pees, if that I mighte;
 Wherfor I am disposed outerly,
 As I his suster servede by nighte,
 Right so thenke I to serve him prively;
 This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly
 Out of your-self for no wo sholde outtraye;
 Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye.'
 'I have,' quod she, 'seyd thus, and ever shal,

I wol no thing, ne nil no thing, certayn,
 But as yow list; noght greveth me at al,
 Thogh that my doghter and my sone be slayn,
 At your comandement, this is to sayn.
 I have noght had no part of children tweyne
 But first siknesse, and after wo and peyne.
 Ye been our lord, doth with your owene thing
 Right as yow list; axeth no reed at me.
 For, as I lefte at hoom al my clothing,
 Whan I first cam to yow, right so,' quod she,
 'Left I my wil and al my libertee,
 And took your clothing; wherfor I yow preye,
 Doth your plesaunce, I wol your lust obeye.
 And certes, if I hadde prescience
 Your wil to knowe er ye your lust me tolde,
 I wolde it doon with-outen negligence;
 But now I woot your lust and what ye wolde,
 Al your plesaunce ferme and stable I holde;
 For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese,
 Right gladly wolde I dyen, yow to plese.
 Deth may noght make no comparisoun
 Un-to your love:' and, whan this markis sey
 The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun
 His yën two, and wondreth that she may
 In pacience suffre al this array.
 And forth he gooth with drery contenaunce,
 But to his herte it was ful greet plesaunce.
 This ugly sergeant, in the same wyse
 That he hir doghter caughte, right so he,
 Or worse, if men worse can devyse,
 Hath hent hir sone, that ful was of beautee.
 And ever in oon so pacient was she,
 That she no chere made of hevynesse,
 But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse;
 Save this; she preyed him that, if he mighte,
 Hir litel sone he wolde in erthe grave,
 His tendre limes, delicat to sighte,
 Fro foules and fro bestes for to save.
 But she non answer of him mighte have.
 He wente his wey, as him no-thing ne roghte;
 But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.
 This markis wondreth ever lenger the more
 Up-on hir pacience, and if that he
 Ne hadde soothly knowen ther-bifore,
 That parfitly hir children lovede she,
 He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,
 And of malice or for cruel corage,
 That she had suffred this with sad visage.
 But wel he knew that next him-self, certayn,
 She loved hir children best in every wyse.
 But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn,
 If thise assayes mighte nat suffyse?
 What coude a sturdy housbond more devyse
 To preve hir wyfhod and hir stedfastnesse,
 And he continuing ever in sturdinesse?

But ther ben folk of swich condicioun,
That, whan they have a certein purpos take,
They can nat stinte of hir entencioun,
But, right as they were bounden to a stake,
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake.
Right so this markis fulliche hath purposed
To tempte his wyf, as he was first disposed.
He waiteth, if by word or contenance
That she to him was changed of corage;
But never coude he finde variance;
She was ay oon in herte and in visage;
And ay the forther that she was in age,
The more trewe, if that it were possible,
She was to him in love, and more penible.
For which it semed thus, that of hem two
Ther nas but o wil; for, as Walter leste,
The same lust was hir plesance also,
And, god be thanked, al fil for the beste.
She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste
A wyf, as of hir-self, no-thing ne sholde
Wille in effect, but as hir housbond wolde.
The sclandre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,
That of a cruel herte he wikkedly,
For he a povre womman wedded hadde,
Hath mordred bothe his children prively.
Swich murmur was among hem comunly.
No wonder is, for to the peples ere
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were.
For which, wher-as his peple ther-bifore
Had loved him wel, the sclandre of his diffame
Made hem that they him hatede therfore;
To been a mordrer is an hateful name.
But natheles, for earnest ne for game
He of his cruel purpos nolde stente;
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente.
Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age,
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse
Enformed of his wil, sente his message,
Comaunding hem swiche bulles to devyse
As to his cruel purpos may suffyse,
How that the pope, as for his peples reste,
Bad him to wedde another, if him leste.
I seye, he bad they sholde countrefete
The popes bulles, making mencionioun
That he hath leve his firste wyf to lete,
As by the popes dispensacioun,
To stinte rancour and dissencioun
Bitwixe his peple and him; thus seyde the bulle,
The which they han publiced atte fulle.
The rude peple, as it no wonder is,
Wenden ful wel that it had been right so;
But whan thise tydinges cam to Grisildis,
I deme that hir herte was ful wo.
But she, y-lyke sad for evermo,
Disposed was, this humble creature,

Thadversitee of fortune al tendure.
 Abyding ever his lust and his plesaunce,
 To whom that she was yeven, herte and al,
 As to hir verray worldly suffisaunce;
 But shortly if this storie I tellen shal,
 This markis writen hath in special
 A lettre in which he sheweth his entente,
 And secrely he to Boloigne it sente.
 To the erl of Panik, which that hadde tho
 Wedded his suster, preyde he specially
 To bringen boom agayn his children two
 In honorable estaat al openly.
 But o thing he him preyede outerly,
 That he to no wight, though men wolde enquire,
 Sholde nat telle, whos children that they were,
 But seye, the mayden sholde y-wedded be
 Un-to the markis of Saluce anon.
 And as this erl was preyed, so dide he;
 For at day set he on his wey is goon
 Toward Saluce, and lordes many oon,
 In riche array, this mayden for to gyde;
 Hir yonge brother ryding hir bisyde.
 Arrayed was toward hir mariage
 This fresshe mayde, ful of gemmes clere;
 Hir brother, which that seven yeer was of age,
 Arrayed eek ful fresh in his manere.
 And thus in greet noblesse and with glad chere,
 Toward Saluces shaping hir Iourney,
 Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

Explicit quarta pars. Sequitur quinta pars.

Among al this, after his wikke usage,
 This markis, yet his wyf to tempte more
 To the uttereste preve of hir corage,
 Fully to han experience and lore
 If that she were as stedfast as bifore,
 He on a day in open audience
 Ful boistously hath seyde hir this sentence:
 'Certes, Grisilde, I hadde y-nough plesaunce
 To han yow to my wyf for your goodnesse,
 As for your trouthe and for your obeisaunce,
 Nought for your linage ne for your richesse;
 But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse
 That in gret lordshipe, if I wel avyse,
 Ther is gret servitude in sondry wyse.
 I may nat don as every plowman may;
 My peple me constreyneth for to take
 Another wyf, and cryen day by day;
 And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,
 Consenteth it, that dar I undertake;
 And troweliche thus muche I wol yow seye,
 My newe wyf is coming by the weye.
 Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,
 And thilke dower that ye broghten me
 Tak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace;
 Retourneth to your fadres hous,' quod he;

'No man may alwey han prosperitee;
With evene herte I rede yow tendure
The strook of fortune or of aventure.'
And she answerde agayn in pacience,
'My lord,' quod she, 'I woot, and wiste alway
How that bitwixen your magnificence
And my poverte no wight can ne may
Maken comparison; it is no nay.
I ne heeld me never digne in no manere
To be your wyf, no, ne your chamberere.
And in this hous, ther ye me lady made—
The heighe god take I for my witnesse,
And also wisly he my soule glade—
I never heeld me lady ne maistresse,
But humble servant to your worthinesse,
And ever shal, whyl that my lyf may dure,
Aboven every worldly creature.
That ye so longe of your benignitee
Han holden me in honour and nobleye,
Wher-as I was noght worthy for to be,
That thonke I god and yow, to whom I preye
Foryelde it yow; there is na-more to seye.
Un-to my fader gladly wol I wende,
And with him dwelle un-to my lyves ende.
Ther I was fostred of a child ful smal,
Til I be deed, my lyf ther wol I lede
A widwe clene, in body, herte, and al.
For sith I yaf to yow my maydenhede,
And am your trewe wyf, it is no drede,
God shilde swich a lordes wyf to take
Another man to housbonde or to make.
And of your newe wyf, god of his grace
So graunte yow wele and prosperitee:
For I wol gladly yelden hir my place,
In which that I was blisful wont to be,
For sith it lyketh yow, my lord,' quod she,
'That whylom weren al myn hertes reste,
That I shal goon, I wol gon whan yow leste.
But ther-as ye me profre swich dowaire
As I first broghte, it is wel in my minde
It were my wrecched clothes, no-thing faire,
The which to me were hard now for to finde.
O gode god! how gentil and how kinde
Ye semed by your speche and your visage
The day that maked was our mariage!
But sooth is seyde, algate I finde it trewe—
For in effect it preved is on me—
Love is noght old as whan that it is newe.
But certes, lord, for noon adversitee,
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat be
That ever in word or werk I shal repente
That I yow yaf myn herte in hool entente.
My lord, ye woot that, in my fadres place,
Ye dede me strepe out of my povre wede,
And richely me cladden, of your grace.

To yow broghte I noght elles, out of drede,
 But feyth and nakednesse and maydenhede.
 And here agayn my clothing I restore,
 And eek my wedding-ring, for evermore.
 The remenant of your Iewels redy be
 In-with your chambre, dar I sauflly sayn;
 Naked out of my fadres hous,' quod she,
 'I cam, and naked moot I turne agayn.
 Al your plesaunce wol I folwen fayn;
 But yet I hope it be nat your entente
 That I smoklees out of your paleys wente.
 Ye coude nat doon so dishoneste a thing,
 That thilke wombe in which your children leye
 Sholde, biforn the peple, in my walking,
 Be seyn al bare; wherfor I yow preye,
 Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye.
 Remembre yow, myn owene lord so dere,
 I was your wyf, thogh I unworthy were.
 Wherfor, in guerdon of my maydenhede,
 Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,
 As voucheth sauf to yeve me, to my mede,
 But swich a smok as I was wont to were,
 That I therwith may wrye the wombe of here
 That was your wyf; and heer take I my leve
 Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve.'
 'The smok,' quod he, 'that thou hast on thy bak,
 Lat it be stille, and ber it forth with thee.'
 But wel unnethes thilke word he spak,
 But wente his wey for rewthe and for pitee.
 Biforn the folk hir-selven strepeth she,
 And in hir smok, with heed and foot al bare,
 Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.
 The folk hir folwe wepinge in hir weye,
 And fortune ay they cursen as they goon;
 But she fro weping kepte hir yën dreye,
 Ne in this tyme word ne spak she noon.
 Hir fader, that this tyding herde anoon,
 Curseth the day and tyme that nature
 Shoop him to been a lyves creature.
 For out of doute this olde povre man
 Was ever in suspect of hir mariage;
 For ever he demed, sith that it bigan,
 That whan the lord fulfild had his corage,
 Him wolde thinke it were a disparage
 To his estaat so lowe for talighte,
 And voyden hir as sone as ever he mighte.
 Agayns his doghter hastilich goth he,
 For he by noyse of folk knew hir cominge,
 And with hir olde cote, as it mighte be,
 He covered hir, ful sorwefully wepinge;
 But on hir body mighte he it nat bringe.
 For rude was the cloth, and more of age
 By dayes fele than at hir mariage.
 Thus with hir fader, for a certeyn space,
 Dwelleth this flour of wyfly pacience,

That neither by hir wordes ne hir face
 Biforn the folk, ne eek in hir absence,
 Ne shewed she that hir was doon offence;
 Ne of hir heigh estaat no remembraunce
 Ne hadde she, as by hir countenaunce.
 No wonder is, for in hir grete estaat
 Hir goost was ever in pleyn humylitee;
 No tendre mouth, non herte delicaat,
 No pompe, no semblant of royaltee,
 But ful of pacient benignitee,
 Discreet and prydeles, ay honourable,
 And to hir housbonde ever meke and stable.
 Men speke of Iob and most for his humblesse,
 As clerkes, whan hem list, can wel endyte,
 Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
 Thogh clerkes preyse wommen but a lyte,
 Ther can no man in humblesse him acquyte
 As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe
 As wommen been, but it be falle of-newe.

[*Pars Sexta.*]

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Panik come,
 Of which the fame up-sprang to more and lesse,
 And in the peples eres alle and some
 Was couth eek, that a newe markisesse
 He with him broghte, in swich pompe and richesse,
 That never was ther seyn with mannes yë
 So noble array in al West Lumbardye.
 The markis, which that shoop and knew al this,
 Er that this erl was come, sente his message
 For thilke sely povre Grisildis;
 And she with humble herte and glad visage,
 Nat with no swollen thought in hir corage,
 Cam at his heste, and on hir knees hir sette,
 And reverently and wysly she him grette.
 'Grisild,' quod he, 'my wille is outerly,
 This mayden, that shal wedded been to me,
 Receyved be to-morwe as royally
 As it possible is in myn hous to be.
 And eek that every wight in his degree
 Have his estaat in sitting and servyse
 And heigh plesaunce, as I can best devyse.
 I have no wommen suffisaunt certayn
 The chambres for tarraye in ordinaunce
 After my lust, and therfor wolde I fayn
 That thyn were al swich maner governaunce;
 Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce;
 Though thyn array be badde and yvel biseye,
 Do thou thy devoir at the leeste weye.'
 'Nat only, lord, that I am glad,' quod she,
 'To doon your lust, but I desyre also
 Yow for to serve and plesse in my degree
 With-outen feynting, and shal evermo.
 Ne never, for no wele ne no wo,
 Ne shal the gost with-in myn herte stente
 To love yow best with al my trewe entente.'

And with that word she gan the hous to dighte,
 And tables for to sette and beddes make;
 And peyned hir to doon al that she mighte,
 Preying the chambereres, for goddes sake,
 To hasten hem, and faste swepe and shake;
 And she, the moste servisable of alle,
 Hath every chambre arrayed and his halle.
 Abouten undern gan this erl alighte,
 That with him broghte thise noble children tweye,
 For which the peple ran to seen the sighte
 Of hir array, so richely biseye;
 And than at erst amonges hem they seye,
 That Walter was no fool, thogh that him leste
 To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste.
 For she is fairer, as they demen alle,
 Than is Grisild, and more tendre of age,
 And fairer fruit bitwene hem sholde falle,
 And more plesant, for hir heigh linage;
 Hir brother eek so fair was of visage,
 That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesaunce,
 Commending now the markis gouernaunce.—
Auctor. 'O stormy peple! unsad and ever untrewe!
 Ay undiscreet and chaunging as a vane,
 Delyting ever in rumbel that is newe,
 For lyk the mone ay wexe ye and wane;
 Ay ful of clapping, dere y-nogh a lane;
 Your doom is fals, your constance yvel preveth,
 A ful greet fool is he that on yow leveth!'

Thus seyden sadde folk in that citee,
 Whan that the peple gazed up and down,
 For they were glad, right for the noveltee,
 To han a newe lady of hir toun.
 Na-more of this make I now mencioun;
 But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,
 And telle hir constance and hir bisnesse.—
 Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thing
 That to the feste was apertinent;
 Right noght was she abayst of hir clothing,
 Though it were rude and somdel eek to-rent.
 But with glad chere to the yate is went,
 With other folk, to grete the markisesse,
 And after that doth forth hir bisnesse.
 With so glad chere his gestes she receyveth,
 And conningly, everich in his degree,
 That no defaute no man aperceyveth;
 But ay they wondren what she mighte be
 That in so povre array was for to see,
 And coude swich honour and reverence;
 And worthily they preisen hir prudence.
 In al this mene whyle she ne stente
 This mayde and eek hir brother to commende
 With al hir herte, in ful benigne entente,
 So wel, that no man coude hir prys amende.
 But atte laste, whan that thise lordes wende
 To sitten doun to mete, he gan to calle

Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.
'Grisilde,' quod he, as it were in his pley,
'How lyketh thee my wyf and hir beautee?'
'Right wel,' quod she, 'my lord; for, in good fey,
A fairer say I never noon than she.
I prey to god yeve hir prosperitee;
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende
Plesance y-nogh un-to your lyves ende.
O thing biseke I yow and warne also,
That ye ne prikke with no tormentinge
This tendre mayden, as ye han don mo;
For she is fostred in hir norishinge
More tendrely, and, to my supposinge,
She coude nat adversitee endure
As coude a povre fostred creature.'
And whan this Walter say hir pacience,
Hir glade chere and no malice at al,
And he so ofte had doon to hir offence,
And she ay sad and constant as a wal,
Continuing ever hir innocence overal,
This sturdy markis gan his herte dresse
To rewen up-on hir wyfly stedfastnesse.
'This is y-nogh, Grisilde myn,' quod he,
'Be now na-more agast ne yvel apayed;
I have thy feith and thy benignitee,
As wel as ever womman was, assayed,
In greet estaat, and povreliche arrayed.
Now knowe I, dere wyf, thy stedfastnesse,'—
And hir in armes took and gan hir kesse.
And she for wonder took of it no keep;
She herde nat what thing he to hir seyde;
She ferde as she had stert out of a sleep,
Til she out of hir masednesse abreyde.
'Grisilde,' quod he, 'by god that for us deyde,
Thou art my wyf, ne noon other I have,
Ne never hadde, as god my soule save!
This is thy doghter which thou hast supposed
To be my wyf; that other feithfully
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed;
Thou bare him in thy body trewely.
At Boloigne have I kept hem prively;
Tak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye
That thou hast lorn non of thy children tweye.
And folk that otherweyes han seyd of me,
I warne hem wel that I have doon this dede
For no malice ne for no crueltee,
But for tassaye in thee thy wommanhede,
And nat to sleen my children, god forbede!
But for to kepe hem prively and stille,
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille.'
Whan she this herde, aswowne doun she falleth
For pitous Ioye, and after hir swowninge
She bothe hir yonge children un-to hir calleth,
And in hir armes, pitously wepinge,
Embraceth hem, and tendrely kissinge

Ful lyk a mooder, with hir salte teres
 She batheth bothe hir visage and hir heres.
 O, which a pitous thing it was to see
 Hir swowning, and hir humble voys to here!
 'Grauntmercy, lord, that thanke I yow,' quod she,
 'That ye han saved me my children dere!
 Now rekke I never to ben deed right here;
 Sith I stonde in your love and in your grace,
 No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace!
 O tendre, o dere, o yonge children myne,
 Your woful mooder wende stedfastly
 That cruel houndes or som foul vermyne
 Hadde eten yow; but god, of his mercy,
 And your benigne fader tendrely
 Hath doon yow kept;' and in that same stounde
 Al sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde.
 And in her swough so sadly holdeth she
 Hir children two, whan she gan hem tembrace,
 That with greet sleighte and greet difficultee
 The children from hir arm they gonne arace.
 O many a teer on many a pitous face
 Doun ran of hem that stoden hir bisyde;
 Unnethe abouten hir mighte they abyde.
 Walter hir gladeth, and hir sorwe slaketh;
 She ryseth up, abaysed, from hir traunce,
 And every wight hir loye and feste maketh,
 Til she hath caught agayn hir contenaunce.
 Walter hir dooth so feithfully plesaunce,
 That it was deyntee for to seen the chere
 Bitwixe hem two, now they ben met y-fere.
 Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme say,
 Han taken hir, and in-to chambre goon,
 And strepen hir out of hir rude array,
 And in a cloth of gold that brighte shoon,
 With a coroune of many a riche stoon
 Up-on hir heed, they in-to halle hir broghte,
 And ther she was honoured as hir oghte.
 Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,
 For every man and womman dooth his might
 This day in murthe and revel to dispende
 Til on the welkne shoon the sterres light.
 For more solempne in every mannes sight
 This feste was, and gretter of costage,
 Than was the revel of hir mariage.
 Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee
 Liven thise two in concord and in reste,
 And richely his doghter married he
 Un-to a lord, oon of the worthieste
 Of al Itaille; and than in pees and reste
 His wyves fader in his court he kepeth,
 Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.
 His sone succedeth in his heritage
 In reste and pees, after his fader day;
 And fortunat was eek in mariage,
 Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.

This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,
 As it hath been in olde tymes yore,
 And herkneth what this auctour seith therfore.
 This storie is seyde, nat for that wyves sholde
 Folwen Grisilde as in humilitee,
 For it were importable, though they wolde;
 But for that every wight, in his degree,
 Sholde be constant in adversitee
 As was Grisilde; therfor Petrark wryteth
 This storie, which with heigh style he endyteth.
 For, sith a womman was so pacient
 Un-to a mortal man, wel more us oghte
 Receyven al in gree that god us sent;
 For greet skile is, he preve that he wroghte.
 But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,
 As seith seint Iame, if ye his pistel rede;
 He preveth folk al day, it is no drede,
 And suffreth us, as for our excercyse,
 With sharpe scourges of adversitee
 Ful ofte to be bete in sondry wyse;
 Nat for to knowe our wil, for certes he,
 Er we were bom, knew al our freletee;
 And for our beste is al his governaunce;
 Lat us than live in vertuous suffraunce.
 But o word, lordinges, herkneth er I go:—
 It were ful hard to finde now a dayes
 In al a toun Grisildes three or two;
 For, if that they were put to swiche assayes,
 The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes
 With bras, that thogh the coyne be fair at yë,
 It wolde rather breste a-two than plye.
 For which heer, for the wyves love of Bathe,
 Whos lyf and al hir secte god mayntene
 In heigh maistrye, and elles were it scathe,
 I wol with lusty herte fresshe and grene
 Seyn yow a song to glade yow, I wene,
 And lat us stinte of earnestful matere:—
 Herkneth my song, that seith in this manere.

Lenvoy de Chaucer.

Grisilde is deed, and eek hir pacience,
 And bothe atones buried in Itaille;
 For which I crye in open audience,
 No wedded man so hardy be tassaille
 His wyves pacience, in hope to finde
 Grisildes, for in certein he shall faille!
 O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
 Lat noon humilitee your tonge naille,
 Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
 To wryte of yow a storie of swich mervaille
 As of Grisildis pacient and kinde;
 Lest Chichevache yow swelwe in hir entraille!
 Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,
 But evere answereth at the countretaille;
 Beth nat bidaffed for your innocence,
 But sharply tak on yow the governaille.

Emprinteth wel this lesson in your minde
 For commune profit, sith it may availle.
 Ye archewyves, stondeth at defence,
 Sin ye be stronge as is a greet camaille;
 Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offence.
 And sclendre wyves, feble as in bataille,
 Beth egre as is a tygre yond in Inde;
 Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille.
 Ne dreed hem nat, do hem no reverence;
 For though thyn housbonde armed be in maille,
 The arwes of thy crabbed eloquence
 Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille;
 In Ialousye I rede eek thou him binde,
 And thou shalt make him couche as dooth a quaille.
 If thou be fair, ther folk ben in presence
 Shew thou thy visage and thyn apparaille;
 If thou be foul, be free of thy dispence,
 To gete thee freendes ay do thy travaille;
 Be ay of chere as light as leef on linde,
 And lat him care, and wepe, and wringe, and waille!
Here endeth the Clerk of Oxonford his Tale.

THE MERCHANT'S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Marchantes Tale.
 'Weping and wayling, care, and other sorwe
 I know y-nogh, on even and a-morwe,'
 Quod the Marchaunt, 'and so don othere mo
 That wedded been, I trowe that it be so.
 For, wel I woot, it fareth so with me.
 I have a wyf, the worste that may be;
 For thogh the feend to hir y-coupled were,
 She wolde him overmacche, I dar wel swere.
 What sholde I yow reherce in special
 Hir hye malice? she is a shrewe at al.
 Ther is a long and large difference
 Bitwix Grisildis grete pacience
 And of my wyf the passing crueltee.
 Were I unbounden, al-so moot I thee!
 I wolde never eft comen in the snare.
 We wedded men live in sorwe and care;
 Assaye who-so wol, and he shal finde
 I seye sooth, by seint Thomas of Inde,
 As for the more part, I sey nat alle.
 God shilde that it sholde so bifalle!
 A! good sir hoost! I have y-wedded be
 Thise monthes two, and more nat, pardee;
 And yet, I trowe, he that all his lyve
 Wyfles hath been, though that men wolde him ryve
 Un-to the herte, ne coude in no manere
 Tellen so muchel sorwe, as I now here
 Coude tellen of my wyves cursdnesse!'

'Now,' quod our hoost, 'Marchaunt, so god yow blesse,
 Sin ye so muchel knowen of that art,
 Ful hertely I pray yow telle us part.'

'Gladly,' quod he, 'but of myn owene sore,
For sory herte, I telle may na-more.'

THE MARCHANTES TALE.

Here biginneth the Marchantes Tale.

Whylom ther was dwellinge in Lumbardye
A worthy knight, that born was of Pavye,
In which he lived in greet prosperitee;
And sixty yeer a wyflee man was he,
And folwed ay his bodily delyt
On wommen, ther-as was his appetyt,
As doon thise foles that ben seculer.
And whan that he was passed sixty yeer,
Were it for holinesse or for dotage,
I can nat seye, but swich a greet corage
Hadde this knight to been a wedded man,
That day and night he dooth al that he can
Tespyn where he mighte wedded be;
Preyinge our lord to granten him, that he
Mighte ones knowe of thilke blisful lyf
That is bitwixe an housbond and his wyf;
And for to live under that holy bond
With which that first god man and womman bond,
'Non other lyf,' seyde he, 'is worth a bene;
For wedlok is so esy and so clene,
That in this world it is a paradys.'
Thus seyde this olde knight, that was so wys.
And certainly, as sooth as god is king,
To take a wyf, it is a glorious thing,
And namely whan a man is old and hoor;
Thanne is a wyf the fruit of his tresor.
Than sholde he take a yong wyf and a feir,
On which he mighte engendren him an heir,
And lede his lyf in Ioye and in solas,
Wher-as thise bacheleres singe 'allas,'
Whan that they finden any adversitee
In love, which nis but childish vanitee.
And trewely it sit wel to be so,
That bacheleres have often peyne and wo;
On brotel ground they builde, and brotelnesse
They finde, whan they wene sikernes.
They live but as a brid or as a beste,
In libertee, and under non areste,
Ther-as a wedded man in his estaat
Liveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat,
Under the yok of mariage y-bounde;
Wel may his herte in Ioye and blisse habounde.
For who can be so buxom as a wyf?
Who is so trewe, and eek so ententyf
To kepe him, syk and hool, as is his make?
For wele or wo, she wol him nat forsake.
She nis nat wery him to love and serve,
Thogh that he lye bedrede til he sterve.
And yet somme clerkes seyn, it nis nat so,

Of whiche he, Theofraste, is oon of tho.
 What force though Theofraste liste lye?
 'Ne take no wyf,' quod he, 'for housbondrye,
 As for to spare in houshold thy dispenche;
 A trewe servant dooth more diligence,
 Thy good to kepe, than thyn owene wyf.
 For she wol clayme half part al hir lyf;
 And if that thou be syk, so god me save,
 Thy verray frendes or a trewe knave
 Wol kepe thee bet than she that waiteth ay
 After thy good, and hath don many a day.
 And if thou take a wyf un-to thyn hold,
 Ful lightly maystow been a cokewold.'
 This sentence, and an hundred thinges worse,
 Wryteth this man, ther god his bones corse!
 But take no kepe of al swich vanitee;
 Deffye Theofraste and herke me.
 A wyf is goddes yifte verrailly;
 Alle other maner yiftes hardily,
 As londes, rentes, pasture, or commune,
 Or moebles, alle ben yiftes of fortune,
 That passen as a shadwe upon a wal.
 But dredelees, if pleyedly speke I shal,
 A wyf wol laste, and in thyn hous endure,
 Wel lenger than thee list, paraventure.
 Mariage is a ful gret sacrament;
 He which that hath no wyf, I holde him shent;
 He liveth helplees and al desolat,
 I speke of folk in seculer estaat.
 And herke why, I sey nat this for noght,
 That womman is for mannes help y-wroght.
 The hye god, whan he hadde Adam maked,
 And saugh him al allone, bely-naked,
 God of his grete goodnesse seyde than,
 'Lat us now make an help un-to this man
 Lyk to him-self;' and thanne he made him Eve.
 Heer may ye se, and heer-by may ye preve,
 That wyf is mannes help and his confort,
 His paradys terrestre and his disport.
 So buxom and so vertuous is she,
 They moste nedes live in unitee.
 O flesh they been, and o flesh, as I gesse,
 Hath but on herte, in wele and in distresse.
 A wyf! a! Seinte Marie, *benedicite!*
 How mighte a man han any adversitee
 That hath a wyf? certes, I can nat seye.
 The blisse which that is bitwixe hem tweye
 Ther may no tonge telle, or herte thinke.
 If he be povre, she helpeth him to swinke;
 She kepeth his good, and wasteth never a deel;
 Al that hir housbonde lust, hir lyketh weel;
 She seith not ones 'nay,' whan he seith 'ye.'
 'Do this,' seith he; 'al redy, sir,' seith she.
 O blisful ordre of wedlok precious,
 Thou art so mery, and eek so vertuous,

And so commended and appreve eek,
That every man that halt him worth a leek,
Up-on his bare knees oghte al his lyf
Thanken his god that him hath sent a wyf;
Or elles preye to god him for to sende
A wyf, to laste un-to his lyves ende.
For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse;
He may nat be deceyved, as I gesse,
So that he werke after his wyves reed;
Than may he boldly beren up his heed,
They been so trewe and ther-with-al so wyse;
For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse,
Do alwey so as wommen wol thee rede.
Lo, how that Iacob, as thise clerkes rede,
By good conseil of his moder Rebekke,
Bond the kides skin aboute his nekke;
Thurgh which his fadres benisoun he wan.
Lo, Iudith, as the storie eek telle can,
By wys conseil she goddes peple kepte,
And slow him, Olofernus, whyl he slepte.
Lo Abigayl, by good conseil how she
Saved hir housbond Nabal, whan that he
Sholde han be slayn; and loke, Ester also
By good conseil delivered out of wo
The peple of god, and made him, Mardochee,
Of Assuere enhaunced for to be.
Ther nis no-thing in gree superlatyf,
As seith Senek, above an humble wyf.
Suffre thy wyves tonge, as Caton bit;
She shal comande, and thou shalt suffren it;
And yet she wol obeye of curteisye.
A wyf is keper of thyn housbondrye;
Wel may the syke man biwaille and wepe,
Ther-as ther nis no wyf the hous to kepe.
I warne thee, if wysly thou wolt wirche,
Love wel thy wyf, as Crist loveth his chirche.
If thou lovest thy-self, thou lovest thy wyf;
No man hateth his flesh, but in his lyf
He fostreth it, and therfore bidde I thee,
Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt never thee.
Housbond and wyf, what so men lape or pleye,
Of worldly folk holden the siker weye;
They been so knit, ther may noon harm bityde;
And namely, up-on the wyves syde.
For which this Ianuarie, of whom I tolde,
Considered hath, in with his dayes olde,
The lusty lyf, the vertuous quite,
That is in mariage hony-swete;
And for his freendes on a day he sente,
To tellen hem theeffect of his entente.
With face sad, his tale he hath hem told;
He seyde, 'freendes, I am hoor and old,
And almost, god wot, on my pittes brinke;
Up-on my soule somewhat moste I thinke.
I have my body folily despended;

Blessed be god, that it shal been amended!
 For I wol be, certeyn, a wedded man,
 And that anoon in al the haste I can,
 Un-to som mayde fair and tendre of age.
 I prey yow, shapeth for my mariage
 Al sodeynly, for I wol nat abyde;
 And I wol fonde tespyen, on my syde,
 To whom I may be wedded hastily.
 But for-as-muche as ye ben mo than I,
 Ye shullen rather swich a thing espyen
 Than I, and wher me best were to allyen.
 But o thing warne I yow, my freendes dere,
 I wol non old wyf han in no manere.
 She shal nat passe twenty yeer, certayn;
 Old fish and yong flesh wolde I have ful fayn.
 Bet is,' quod he, 'a pyk than a pikerel;
 And bet than old boef is the tendre veel.
 I wol no womman thritty yeer of age,
 It is but bene-straw and greet forage.
 And eek thise olde widwes, god it woot,
 They conne so muchel craft on Wades boot,
 So muchel broken harm, whan that hem leste,
 That with hem sholde I never live in reste.
 For sondry scoles maken sotil clerkis;
 Womman of manye scoles half a clerk is.
 But certeynly, a yong thing may men gye,
 Right as men may warm wex with handes plye.
 Wherfore I sey yow pleyntly, in a clause,
 I wol non old wyf han right for this cause.
 For if so were, I hadde swich mischaunce,
 That I in hir ne coude han no plesaunce,
 Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye,
 And go streight to the devel, whan I dye.
 Ne children sholde I none up-on hir geten;
 Yet were me lever houndes had me eten,
 Than that myn heritage sholde falle
 In straunge hand, and this I tell yow alle.
 I dote nat, I woot the cause why
 Men sholde wedde, and forthermore wot I,
 Ther speketh many a man of mariage,
 That woot na-more of it than woot my page,
 For whiche causes man sholde take a wyf.
 If he ne may nat liven chast his lyf,
 Take him a wyf with greet devocioun,
 By-cause of leveful procreacioun
 Of children, to thonour of god above,
 And nat only for paramour or love;
 And for they sholde lecherye eschue,
 And yelde hir dettes whan that they ben due;
 Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen other
 In meschief, as a suster shal the brother;
 And live in chastitee ful holily.
 But sires, by your leve, that am nat I.
 For god be thanked, I dar make avaunt,
 I fele my limes stark and suffisaunt

To do al that a man bilongeth to;
I woot my-selven best what I may do.
Though I be hoor, I fare as dooth a tree
That blometh er that fruyt y-woxen be;
A blommy tree nis neither drye ne deed.
I fele me nowher hoor but on myn heed;
Myn herte and alle my limes been as grene
As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene.
And sin that ye han herd al myn entente,
I prey yow to my wil ye wole assente.
Diverse men diversely him tolde
Of mariage manye ensamples olde.
Somme blamed it, somme preysed it, certeyn;
But atte laste, shortly for to seyn,
As al day falleth altercacioun
Bitwixen freendes in disputisoun,
Ther fil a stryf bitwixe his bretheren two,
Of whiche that oon was cleped Placebo,
Iustinus soothly called was that other.
Placebo seyde, 'o Ianuarie, brother,
Ful litel nede had ye, my lord so dere,
Conseil to axe of any that is here;
But that ye been so ful of sapience,
That yow ne lyketh, for your heighe prudence,
To weyven fro the word of Salomon.
This word seyde he un-to us everichon:
"Wirk alle thing by conseil," thus seyde he,
"And thanne shaltow nat repente thee."
But though that Salomon spak swich a word,
Myn owene dere brother and my lord,
So wisly god my soule bringe at reste,
I hold your owene conseil is the beste.
For brother myn, of me tak this motyf,
I have now been a court-man al my lyf.
And god it woot, though I unworthy be,
I have stonden in ful greet degree
Abouten lordes of ful heigh estaat;
Yet hadde I never with noon of hem debaat.
I never hem contraried, trewely;
I woot wel that my lord can more than I.
What that he seith, I holde it ferme and stable;
I seye the same, or elles thing semblable.
A ful gret fool is any conseillour,
That serveth any lord of heigh honour,
That dar presume, or elles thenken it,
That his conseil sholde passe his lordes wit.
Nay, lordes been no foles, by my fay;
Ye han your-selven shewed heer to-day
So heigh sentence, so holily and weel,
That I consente and conferme every-deel
Your wordes alle, and your opinioun.
By god, ther nis no man in al this toun
Nin al Itaille, that coude bet han sayd;
Crist halt him of this conseil wel apayd.
And trewely, it is an heigh corage

Of any man, that stopen is in age,
 To take a yong wyf; by my fader kin,
 Your herte hangeth on a Ioly pin.
 Doth now in this matere right as yow leste,
 For finally I holde it for the beste.
 Iustinus, that ay stille sat and herde,
 Right in this wyse to Placebo answerde:
 'Now brother myn, be pacient, I preye,
 Sin ye han seyde, and herkneth what I seye.
 Senek among his othere wordes wyse
 Seith, that a man oghte him right wel avyse,
 To whom he yeveth his lond or his catel.
 And sin I oghte avyse me right wel
 To whom I yeve my good away fro me,
 Wel muchel more I oghte avysed be
 To whom I yeve my body; for alwey
 I warne yow wel, it is no childes pley
 To take a wyf with-oute avysement.
 Men moste enquire, this is myn assent,
 Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkelewe,
 Or proud, or elles other-weys a shrewe;
 A chydeste, or wastour of thy good,
 Or riche, or poore, or elles mannish wood.
 Al-be-it so that no man finden shal
 Noon in this world that trotteth hool in al,
 Ne man ne beest, swich as men coude devyse;
 But nathelees, it oghte y-nough suffise
 With any wyf, if so were that she hadde
 Mo gode thewes than hir vyces badde;
 And al this axeth leyser for tenquere.
 For god it woot, I have wept many a tere
 Ful prively, sin I have had a wyf.
 Preyse who-so wole a wedded mannes lyf,
 Certein, I finde in it but cost and care,
 And observances, of alle blisses bare.
 And yet, god woot, my neighebores aboute,
 And namely of wommen many a route,
 Seyn that I have the moste stedefast wyf,
 And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf.
 But I wot best wher wringeth me my sho.
 Ye mowe, for me, right as yow lyketh do;
 Avyseth yow, ye been a man of age,
 How that ye entren in-to mariage,
 And namely with a yong wyf and a fair.
 By him that made water, erthe, and air,
 The yongest man that is in al this route
 Is bisy y-nogh to bringen it aboute
 To han his wyf allone, trusteth me.
 Ye shul nat plese hir fully yeres three,
 This is to seyn, to doon hir ful plesaunce.
 A wyf axeth ful many an observaunce.
 I prey yow that ye be nat yvel apayd.
 'Wel,' quod this Ianuarie, 'and hastow sayd?
 Straw for thy Senek, and for thy proverbes,
 I counte nat a panier ful of herbes

Of scole-termes; wyser men than thou,
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now
To my purpos; Placebo, what sey ye?’
’I seye, it is a cursed man,’ quod he,
’That letteth matrimoine, sikerly.’
And with that word they rysen sodeynly,
And been assented fully, that he sholde
Be wedded whanne him list and wher he wolde.
Heigh fantasye and curious bisnesse
Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse
Of Ianuarie aboute his mariage.
Many fair shap, and many a fair visage
Ther passeth thurgh his herte, night by night.
As who-so toke a mirour polished bright,
And sette it in a commune market-place,
Than sholde he see many a figure pace
By his mirour; and, in the same wyse,
Gan Ianuarie inwith his thoght devyse
Of maydens, whiche that dwelten him bisyde.
He wiste nat wher that he mighte abyde.
For if that oon have beaute in hir face,
Another stant so in the peples grace
For hir sadnesse, and hir benignitee,
That of the peple grettest voys hath she.
And somme were riche, and hadden badde name.
But nathelees, bitwixe ernest and game,
He atte laste apoynted him on oon,
And leet alle othere from his herte goon,
And chees hir of his owene auctoritee;
For love is blind al day, and may nat see.
And whan that he was in his bed y-brought,
He purtreyed, in his herte and in his thoght,
Hir fresshe beautee and hir age tendre,
Hir myddel smal, hir armes longe and sclendre,
Hir wyse governaunce, hir gentillesse,
Hir wommanly beringe and hir sadnesse.
And whan that he on hir was condescended,
Him thoughte his chois mighte nat ben amended.
For whan that he him-self concluded hadde,
Him thoughte ech other mannes wit so badde,
That impossible it were to replye
Agayn his chois, this was his fantasye.
His freendes sente he to at his instaunce,
And preyed hem to doon him that plesaunce,
That hastily they wolden to him come;
He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and some.
Nedeth na-more for him to go ne ryde,
He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde.
Placebo cam, and eek his freendes sone,
And alderfirst he bad hem alle a bone,
That noon of hem none argumentes make
Agayn the purpos which that he hath take;
’Which purpos was plesant to god,’ seyde he,
’And verray ground of his prosperitee.’
He seyde, ther was a mayden in the toun,

Which that of beautee hadde greet renoun,
 Al were it so she were of smal degree;
 Suffyseth him hir youthe and hir beautee.
 Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to his wyf,
 To lede in ese and holinesse his lyf.
 And thanked god, that he mighte han hire al,
 That no wight of his blisse parten shal.
 And preyde hem to labouren in this nede,
 And shapen that he faille nat to spede;
 For thanne, he seyde, his spirit was at ese.
 'Thanne is,' quod he, 'no-thing may me displese,
 Saue o thing priketh in my conscience,
 The which I wol reherce in your presence.
 I have,' quod he, 'herd seyde, ful yore ago,
 Ther may no man han parfite blisses two,
 This is to seye, in erthe and eek in hevene.
 For though he kepe him fro the sinnes sevene,
 And eek from every branche of thilke tree,
 Yet is ther so parfit felicittee,
 And so greet ese and lust in mariage,
 That ever I am agast, now in myn age,
 That I shal lede now so mery a lyf,
 So delicat, with-outen wo and stryf,
 That I shal have myn hevene in erthe here.
 For sith that verray hevene is boght so dere,
 With tribulacioun and greet penaunce,
 How sholde I thanne, that live in swich plesaunce
 As alle wedded men don with hir wyvis,
 Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on lyve is?
 This is my drede, and ye, my bretheren tweye,
 Assoilleth me this questioun, I preyde.'
 Iustinus, which that hated his folye,
 Answerde anon, right in his laperye;
 And for he wolde his longe tale abregge,
 He wolde noon auctoritee allegge,
 But seyde, 'sire, so ther be noon obstacle
 Other than this, god of his hye miracle
 And of his mercy may so for yow wirche,
 That, er ye have your right of holy chirche,
 Ye may repente of wedded mannes lyf,
 In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf.
 And elles, god forbede but he sente
 A wedded man him grace to repente
 Wel ofte rather than a sengle man!
 And therefore, sire, the beste reed I can,
 Dispeire yow noght, but have in your memorie,
 Paraunter she may be your purgatorie!
 She may be goddes mene, and goddes whippe;
 Than shal your soule up to hevene skippe
 Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowe!
 I hope to god, her-after shul ye knowe,
 That their nis no so greet felicittee
 In mariage, ne never-mo shal be,
 That yow shal lette of your savacioun,
 So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,

The lustes of your wyf attemprely,
And that ye plesse hir nat to amorously,
And that ye kepe yow eek from other sinne.
My tale is doon:—for my wit is thinne.
Beth nat agast her-of, my brother dere.’—
(But lat us waden out of this matere.
The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde,
Of mariage, which we have on honde,
Declared hath ful wel in litel space).—
’Fareth now wel, god have yow in his grace.’
And with this word this Justin and his brother
Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of other.
For whan they sawe it moste nedes be,
They wroghten so, by sly and wys trettee,
That she, this mayden, which that Maius highte,
As hastily as ever that she mighte,
Shal wedded be un-to this Ianuarie.
I trowe it were to longe yow to tarie,
If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond,
By which that she was feffed in his lond;
Or for to herkennen of hir riche array.
But finally y-comen is the day
That to the chirche bothe be they went
For to receyve the holy sacrament.
Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his nekke,
And bad hir be lyk Sarra and Rebekke,
In wisdom and in trouthe of mariage;
And seyde his orisons, as is usage,
And crouched hem, and bad god sholde hem blesse,
And made al siker y-nogh with holinesse.
Thus been they wedded with solempnitee,
And at the feste sitteth he and she
With other worthy folk up-on the deys.
Al ful of Ioye and blisse is the paleys,
And ful of instruments and of vitaille,
The moste deyntevous of al Itaille.
Biforn hem stode swiche instruments of soun,
That Orpheus, ne of Thebes Amphioun,
Ne maden never swich a melodye.
At every cours than cam loud minstraleye,
That never tromped Ioab, for to here,
Nor he, Theodomas, yet half so clere,
At Thebes, whan the citee was in doute.
Bacus the wyn hem skinketh al aboute,
And Venus laugheth up-on every wight.
For Ianuarie was bicomme hir knight,
And wolde bothe assayen his corage
In libertee, and eek in mariage;
And with hir fyrbrond in hir hand aboute
Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route.
And certainly, I dar right wel seyn this,
Ymenëus, that god of wedding is,
Sough never his lyf so mery a wedded man.
Hold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,
That wrytest us that ilke wedding murie

Of hir, Philologye, and him, Mercurie
 And of the songes that the Muses songe.
 To smal is bothe thy penne, and eek thy tonge,
 For to descryven of this mariage.
 Whan tendre youthe hath wedded stouping age,
 Ther is swich mirthe that it may nat be writen;
 Assayeth it your-self, than may ye witen
 If that I lye or noon in this matere.
 Maius, that sit with so benigne a chere,
 Hir to biholde it semed fayëryë;
 Quene Ester loked never with swich an yë
 On Assuer, so meke a look hath she.
 I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee;
 But thus muche of hir beautee telle I may,
 That she was lyk the brighte morwe of May,
 Fulfild of alle beautee and plesaunce.
 This Ianuarie is ravissed in a traunce
 At every time he loked on hir face;
 But in his herte he gan hir to manace,
 That he that night in armes wolde hir streyne
 Harder than ever Paris dide Eleyne.
 But nathelees, yet hadde he greet pitee,
 That thilke night offenden hir moste he;
 And thoughte, 'allas! o tendre creature!
 Now wolde god ye mighte wel endure
 Al my corage, it is so sharp and kene;
 I am agast ye shul it nat sustene.
 But god forbede that I dide al my might!
 Now wolde god that it were woxen night,
 And that the night wolde lasten evermo.
 I wolde that al this peple were ago.'
 And finally, he doth al his labour,
 As he best mighte, savinge his honour,
 To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.
 The tyme cam that reson was to ryse;
 And after that, men daunce and drinken faste,
 And spyces al aboute the hous they caste;
 And ful of Ioye and blisse is every man;
 All but a squyer, highte Damian,
 Which carf biforn the knight ful many a day.
 He was so ravissed on his lady May,
 That for the verray payne he was ny wood;
 Almost he swelte and swowned ther he stood.
 So sore hath Venus hurt him with hir brond,
 As that she bar it daunsinge in hir hond.
 And to his bed he wente him hastily;
 Na-more of him as at this tyme speke I.
 But ther I lete him wepe y-nough and pleyne,
 Til fresshe May wol rewen on his payne.

Auctor.

O perilous fyr, that in the bedstraw bredeth!
 O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth!
 O servant traitour, false hoonly hewe,
 Lyk to the naddre in bosom sly untrew,
 God shilde us alle from your aqueyntaunce!

O Ianuarie, dronken in plesaunce
Of mariage, see how thy Damian,
Thyn owene squyer and thy borne man,
Entendeth for to do thee vileinye.
God graunte thee thyn hoonly fo tespye.
For in this world nis worse pestilence
Than hoonly foo al day in thy presence.
Parfourned hath the sonne his ark diurne,
No lenger may the body of him soiurne
On thorisonte, as in that latitude.
Night with his mantel, that is derk and rude,
Gan oversprede the hemisperie aboute;
For which departed is this lusty route
Fro Ianuarie, with thank on every syde.
Hom to hir houses lustily they ryde,
Wher-as they doon hir thinges as hem leste,
And whan they sye hir tyme, goon to reste.
Sone after that, this hastif Ianuarie
Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger tarie.
He drinketh ipocras, clarree, and vernage
Of spyces hote, tencresen his corage;
And many a letuarie hadde he ful fyn,
Swiche as the cursed monk dan Constantyn
Hath writen in his book *de Coitu*;
To eten hem alle, he nas no-thing eschu.
And to his privee freendes thus seyde he:
'For goddes love, as sone as it may be,
Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse.'
And they han doon right as he wol devyse.
Men drinken, and the travers drawe anon;
The bryde was broght a-bedde as stille as stoon;
And whan the bed was with the preest y-blessed,
Out of the chambre hath every wight him dressed.
And Ianuarie hath faste in armes take
His fresshe May, his paradys, his make.
He lulleth hir, he kisseth hir ful ofte
With thikke bristles of his berd unsofte,
Lyk to the skin of houndfish, sharp as brere,
For he was shave al newe in his manere.
He rubbeth hir aboute hir tendre face,
And seyde thus, 'allas! I moot trespace
To yow, my spouse, and yow gretly offende,
Er tyme come that I wil doun descende.
But nathelees, considereth this,' quod he,
'Ther nis no werkman, what-so-ever he be,
That may bothe werke wel and hastily;
This wol be doon at leyser parfitly.
It is no fors how longe that we pleye;
In trewe wedlok wedded be we tweye;
And blessed be the yok that we been inne,
For in our actes we mowe do no sinne.
A man may do no sinne with his wyf,
Ne hurte him-selven with his owene knyf;
For we han leve to pleye us by the lawe.'
Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawe;

And than he taketh a sop in fyn clarree,
 And upright in his bed than sitteth he,
 And after that he sang ful loude and clere,
 And kiste his wyf, and made wantoun chere.
 He was al coltish, ful of ragerye,
 And ful of largon as a flekked pye.
 The slakke skin aboute his nekke shaketh,
 Why! that he sang; so chaunteth he and craketh.
 But god wot what that May thoughte in hir herte,
 Whan she him saugh up sittinge in his sherte,
 In his night-cappe, and with his nekke lene;
 She preyseth nat his pleying worth a bene.
 Than seide he thus, 'my reste wol I take;
 Now day is come, I may no lenger wake.'
 And doun he leyde his heed, and sleep til pryme.
 And afterward, whan that he saugh his tyme,
 Up ryseth Ianuarie; but fresshe May
 Holdeth hir chambre un-to the fourthe day,
 As usage is of wyves for the beste.
 For every labour som-tyme moot han reste,
 Or elles longe may he nat endure;
 This is to seyn, no lyves creature,
 Be it of fish, or brid, or beest, or man.
 Now wol I speke of woful Damian,
 That languissheth for love, as ye shul here;
 Therefore I speke to him in this manere:
 I seye, 'O sely Damian, alas!
 Answer to my demaunde, as in this cas,
 How shaltow to thy lady fresshe May
 Telle thy wo? She wole alwey seye "nay";
 Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo biwreie;
 God be thyn help, I can no bettre seye.'
 This syke Damian in Venus fyr
 So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr;
 For which he putte his lyf in aventure,
 No lenger mighte he in this wyse endure;
 But prively a penner gan he borwe,
 And in a lettre wroot he al his sorwe,
 In manere of a compleynt or a lay,
 Un-to his faire fresshe lady May.
 And in a purs of silk, heng on his sherte,
 He hath it put, and leyde it at his herte.
 The mone that, at noon, was, thilke day
 That Ianuarie hath wedded fresshe May,
 In two of Taur, was in-to Cancre gliden;
 So longe hath Maius in hir chambre biden,
 As custume is un-to thise nobles alle.
 A bryde shal nat eten in the halle,
 Til dayes foure or three dayes atte leste
 Y-passed been; than lat hir go to feste.
 The fourthe day compleet fro noon to noon,
 Whan that the heighe masse was y-doon,
 In halle sit this Ianuarie, and May
 As fresh as is the brighte someres day.
 And so bifel, how that this gode man

Remembred him upon this Damian,
And seyde, 'Seinte Marie! how may this be,
That Damian entendeth nat to me?
Is he ay syk, or how may this bityde?'
His squyeres, whiche that stoden ther bisyde,
Excused him by-cause of his siknesse,
Which letted him to doon his bisnesse;
Noon other cause mighte make him tarie.
'That me forthinketh,' quod this Ianuarie,
'He is a gentil squyer, by my trouthe!
If that he deyde, it were harm and routhe;
He is as wys, discreet, and as secree
As any man I woot of his degree;
And ther-to manly and eek servisable,
And for to been a thrifty man right able.
But after mete, as sone as ever I may,
I wol my-self visyte him and eek May,
To doon him al the confort that I can.'
And for that word him blessed every man,
That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,
He wolde so conforten in siknesse
His squyer, for it was a gentil dede.
'Dame,' quod this Ianuarie, 'tak good hede,
At-after mete ye, with your wommen alle,
Whan ye han been in chambre out of this halle,
That alle ye go see this Damian;
Doth him disport, he is a gentil man;
And telleth him that I wol him visyte,
Have I no-thing but rested me a lyte;
And spede yow faste, for I wole abyde
Til that ye slepe faste by my syde.'
And with that word he gan to him to calle
A squyer, that was marchal of his halle,
And tolde him certeyn thinges, what he wolde.
This fresshe May hath streight hir wey y-holde,
With alle hir wommen, un-to Damian.
Doun by his beddes syde sit she than,
Confortinge him as goodly as she may.
This Damian, whan that his tyme he say,
In secree wise his purs, and eek his bille,
In which that he y-writen hadde his wille,
Hath put in-to hir hand, with-outen more,
Save that he syketh wonder depe and sore,
And softly to hir right thus seyde he:
'Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me;
For I am deed, if that this thing be kid.'
This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hid,
And wente hir wey; ye gete namore of me.
But un-to Ianuarie y-comen is she,
That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.
He taketh hir, and kisseth hir ful ofte,
And leyde him doun to slepe, and that anon.
She feyned hir as that she moste gon
Ther-as ye woot that every wight mot nede.
And whan she of this bille hath taken hede,

She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,
 And in the privee softlyt it caste.
 Who studieth now but faire fresshe May?
 Adoun by olde Ianuarie she lay,
 That sleep, til that the coughe hath him awaked;
 Anon he preyde hir strepen hir al naked;
 He wolde of hir, he seyde, han som plesaunce,
 And seyde, hir clothes dide him encombraunce,
 And she obeyeth, be hir lief or looth.
 But lest that precious folk be with me wrooth,
 How that he wroghte, I dar nat to yow telle;
 Or whether hir thoughte it paradys or helle;
 But here I lete hem werken in hir wyse
 Til evensong rong, and that they moste aryse.
 Were it by destinee or aventure,
 Were it by influence or by nature,
 Or constellacion, that in swich estat
 The hevene stood, that tyme fortunat
 Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes
 (For alle thing hath tyme, as seyn thise clerkes)
 To any womman, for to gete hir love,
 I can nat seye; but grete god above,
 That knoweth that non act is causelees,
 He deme of al, for I wol holde my pees.
 But sooth is this, how that this fresshe May
 Hath take swich impression that day,
 For pitee of this syke Damian,
 That from hir herte she ne dryve can
 The remembraunce for to doon him ese.
 'Certeyn,' thoghte she, 'whom that this thing displese,
 I rekke noght, for here I him assure,
 To love him best of any creature,
 Though he na-more hadde than his sherte.'
 Lo, pitee renneth sone in gentil herte.
 Heer may ye se how excellent franchyse
 In wommen is, whan they hem narwe avyse.
 Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,
 That hath an herte as hard as any stoon,
 Which wolde han lete him sterven in the place
 Wel rather than han graunted him hir grace;
 And hem reioysen in hir cruel pryde,
 And rekke nat to been an homicyde.
 This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
 Right of hir hande a lettre made she,
 In which she graunteth him hir verray grace;
 Ther lakketh noght but only day and place,
 Wher that she mighte un-to his lust suffyse:
 For it shal be right as he wol devyse.
 And whan she saugh hir time, up-on a day,
 To visite this Damian goth May,
 And sotilly this lettre doun she threste
 Under his pilwe, rede it if him leste.
 She taketh him by the hand, and harde him twiste
 So secrely, that no wight of it wiste,
 And bad him been al hool, and forth she wente

To Ianuarie, whan that he for hir sente.
 Up ryseth Damian the nexte morwe,
 Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe.
 He kembeth him, he proyneth him and pyketh,
 He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh;
 And eek to Ianuarie he gooth as lowe
 As ever dide a dogge for the bowe.
 He is so plesant un-to every man,
 (For craft is al, who-so that do it can)
 That every wight is fayn to speke him good;
 And fully in his lady grace he stood.
 Thus lete I Damian aboute his nede,
 And in my tale forth I wol procede.
 Somme clerkes holden that felicitee
 Stant in delyt, and therefor certeyn he,
 This noble Ianuarie, with al his might,
 In honest wyse, as longeth to a knight,
 Shoop him to live ful deliciously.
 His housinge, his array, as honestly
 To his degree was maked as a kinges.
 Amonges othere of his honest thinges,
 He made a gardin, walled al with stoon;
 So fair a gardin woot I nowher noon.
 For out of doute, I verrailly suppose,
 That he that wroot the Romance of the Rose
 Ne coude of it the beautee wel devyse;
 Ne Priapus ne mighte nat suffyse,
 Though he be god of gardins, for to telle
 The beautee of the gardin and the welle,
 That stood under a laurer alwey grene.
 Ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his quene,
 Proserpina, and al hir fayërye
 Disporten hem and maken melodye
 Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men tolde.
 This noble knight, this Ianuarie the olde,
 Swich deintee hath in it to walke and pleye,
 That he wol no wight suffren bere the keye
 Save he him-self; for of the smale wicket
 He bar alwey of silver a smal cliket,
 With which, whan that him leste, he it unshette.
 And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette
 In somer seson, thider wolde he go,
 And May his wyf, and no wight but they two;
 And thinges whiche that were nat doon a-bedde,
 He in the gardin parfourned hem and spedde.
 And in this wyse, many a mery day,
 Lived this Ianuarie and fresshe May.
 But worldly Ioye may nat alwey dure
 To Ianuarie, ne to no creature.

Auctor.

O sodeyn hap, o thou fortune instable,
 Lyk to the scorpion so deceivable,
 That flaterest with thyn heed when thou wolt sting;
 Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn envenyminge.
 O brotil Ioye! o swete venim queynte!

O monstre, that so subtilly canst peynte
 Thy yiftes, under hewe of stedfastnesse,
 That thou deceyvest bothe more and lesse!
 Why hastow Ianuarie thus deceyved,
 That haddest him for thy ful frend receyved?
 And now thou hast biraft him bothe hise yën,
 For sorwe of which desyreth he to dyen.
 Allas! this noble Ianuarie free,
 Amidde his lust and his prosperitee,
 Is woxen blind, and that al sodeynly.
 He wepeth and he wayleth pitously;
 And ther-with-al the fyr of Ialousye,
 Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som folye,
 So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn
 That som man bothe him and hir had slayn.
 For neither after his deeth, nor in his lyf,
 Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,
 But ever live as widwe in clothes blake,
 Soul as the turtle that lost hath hir make.
 But atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,
 His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye;
 For whan he wiste it may noon other be,
 He paciently took his adversitee;
 Save, out of doute, he may nat forgoon
 That he nas Ialous evermore in oon;
 Which Ialousye it was so outrageous,
 That neither in halle, nin noon other hous,
 Ne in noon other place, never-the-mo,
 He nolde suffre hir for to ryde or go,
 But-if that he had hand on hir alway;
 For which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,
 That loveth Damian so benignely,
 That she mot outhen dyen sodeynly,
 Or elles she mot han him as hir leste;
 She wayteth whan hir herte wolde breste.
 Up-on that other syde Damian
 Bicomien is the sorwefulleste man
 That ever was; for neither night ne day
 Ne mighte he speke a word to fresshe May,
 As to his purpos, of no swich matere,
 But-if that Ianuarie moste it here,
 That hadde an hand up-on hir evermo.
 But nathelees, by wryting to and fro
 And privee signes, wiste he what she mente;
 And she knew eek the fyn of his entente.

Auctor.

O Ianuarie, what mighte it thee availle,
 Thou mightest see as fer as shippes saille?
 For also good is blind deceyved be,
 As be deceyved whan a man may se.
 Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hondred yën,
 For al that ever he coude poure or pryen,
 Yet was he blent; and, god wot, so ben mo,
 That wenen wisly that it be nat so.
 Passe over is an ese, I sey na-more.

This fresshe May, that I spak of so yore,
 In warme wex hath emprented the cliket,
 That Ianuarie bar of the smale wicket,
 By which in-to his gardin ofte he wente.
 And Damian, that knew al hir entente,
 The cliket countrefeted prively;
 Ther nis na-more to seye, but hastily
 Som wonder by this cliket shal bityde,
 Which ye shul heren, if ye wole abyde.

Auctor.

O noble Ovyde, ful sooth seystou, god woot!
 What sleighte is it, thogh it be long and hoot,
 That he nil finde it out in som manere?
 By Piramus and Tesbee may men lere;
 Thogh they were kept ful longe streite overal,
 They been accorded, rouninge thurgh a wal,
 Ther no wight coude han founde out swich a sleighte.
 But now to purpos; er that dayes eighte
 Were passed, er the monthe of Iuil, bifil
 That Ianuarie hath caught so greet a wil,
 Thurgh egging of his wyf, him for to pleye
 In his gardin, and no wight but they tweye,
 That in a morwe un-to this May seith he:
 'Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free;
 The turtles vois is herd, my douve swete;
 The winter is goon, with alle his reynes wete;
 Com forth now, with thyn eyen columbyn!
 How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn!
 The gardin is enclosed al aboute;
 Com forth, my whyte spouse; out of doute,
 Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, o wyf!
 No spot of thee ne knew I al my lyf.
 Com forth, and lat us taken our disport;
 I chees thee for my wyf and my confort.'
 Swiche olde lewed wordes used he;
 On Damian a signe made she,
 That he sholde go biforen with his cliket:
 This Damian thanne hath opened the wicket,
 And in he stirte, and that in swich manere,
 That no wight mighte it see neither y-here;
 And stille he sit under a bush anoon.
 This Ianuarie, as blind as is a stoon,
 With Maius in his hand, and no wight mo,
 In-to his fresshe gardin is ago,
 And clapte to the wicket sodeynly.
 'Now, wyf,' quod he, 'heer nis but thou and I,
 That art the creature that I best love.
 For, by that lord that sit in heaven above,
 Lever ich hadde dyen on a knyf,
 Than thee offende, trewe dere wyf!
 For goddes sake, thenk how I thee chees,
 Noght for no coveityse, doutelees,
 But only for the love I had to thee.
 And though that I be old, and may nat see,
 Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow why.

Three thinges, certes, shul ye winne ther-by;
 First, love of Crist, and to your-self honour,
 And al myn heritage, toun and tour;
 I yeve it yow, maketh chartres as yow leste;
 This shal be doon to-morwe er sonne reste.
 So wisly god my soule bringe in blisse,
 I prey yow first, in covenant ye me kisse.
 And thogh that I be Ialous, wyte me noght.
 Ye been so depe enprented in my thoght,
 That, whan that I considere your beautee,
 And ther-with-al the unlykly elde of me,
 I may nat, certes, thogh I sholde dye,
 Forbere to been out of your companye
 For verray love; this is with-outen doute.
 Now kis me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute.
 This fresshe May, whan she thise wordes herde,
 Benignely to Ianuarie answerde,
 But first and forward she bigan to wepe,
 'I have,' quod she, 'a soule for to kepe
 As wel as ye, and also myn honour,
 And of my wyfhod thilke tendre flour,
 Which that I have assured in your hond,
 Whan that the preest to yow my body bond;
 Wherefore I wole answere in this manere
 By the leve of yow, my lord so dere:
 I prey to god, that never dawe the day
 That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,
 If ever I do un-to my kin that shame,
 Or elles I empeyre so my name,
 That I be fals; and if I do that lakke,
 Do strepe me and put me in a sakke,
 And in the nexte river do me drenche.
 I am a gentil womman and no wenche.
 Why speke ye thus? but men ben ever untrewre,
 And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe.
 Ye han non other contenance, I leve,
 But speke to us of untrust and repreve.'
 And with that word she saugh wher Damian
 Sat in the bush, and coughen she bigan,
 And with hir finger signes made she,
 That Damian sholde climbe up-on a tree,
 That charged was with fruit, and up he wente;
 For verrailly he knew al hir entente,
 And every signe that she coude make
 Wel bet than Ianuarie, hir owene make.
 For in a lettre she had told him al
 Of this matere, how he werchen shal.
 And thus I lete him sitte up-on the pyrie,
 And Ianuarie and May rominge myrie.
 Bright was the day, and blew the firmament,
 Phebus of gold his stremes doun hath sent,
 To gladen every flour with his warmnesse.
 He was that tyme *in Geminis*, as I gesse,
 But litel fro his declinacioun
 Of Cancer, Iovis exaltacioun.

And so bifel, that brighte morwe-tyde,
That in that gardin, in the ferther syde,
Pluto, that is the king of fayërye,
And many a lady in his companye,
Folwinge his wyf, the quene Proserpyne,
Ech after other, right as any lyne—
Whil that she gadered floures in the mede,
In Claudian ye may the story rede,
How in his grisly carte he hir fette:—
This king of fairye thanne adoun him sette
Up-on a bench of turves, fresh and grene,
And right anon thus seyde he to his quene.
'My wyf,' quod he, 'ther may no wight sey nay;
Thexperience so preveth every day
The treson whiche that wommen doon to man.
Ten hondred thousand [stories] telle I can
Notable of your untrouthe and brotilnesse.
O Salomon, wys, richest of richesse,
Fulfilde of sapience and of worldly glorie,
Ful worthy been thy wordes to memorie
To every wight that wit and reson can.
Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man:
"Amonges a thousand men yet fond I oon,
But of wommen alle fond I noon."
Thus seith the king that knoweth your wikkednesse;
And Iesus *filius Syrak*, as I gesse,
Ne speketh of yow but selde reverence.
A wilde fyr and corrupt pestilence
So falle up-on your bodies yet to-night!
Ne see ye nat this honorable knight,
By-cause, allas! that he is blind and old,
His owene man shal make him cokewold;
Lo heer he sit, the lechour, in the tree.
Now wol I graunten, of my magestee,
Un-to this olde blinde worthy knight
That he shal have ayeyn his eyen sight,
Whan that his wyf wold doon him vileinye;
Than shal he knowen al hir harlotrye
Both in repreve of hir and othere mo.'
'Ye shal,' quod Proserpyne, 'wol ye so;
Now, by my modres sires soule I swere,
That I shal yeven hir suffisant answer,
And alle wommen after, for hir sake;
That, though they be in any gilt y-take,
With face bold they shulle hem-self excuse,
And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuse.
For lakke of answer, noon of hem shal dyen.
Al hadde man seyn a thing with bothe his yën,
Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,
And wepe, and swere, and chydte subtilly,
So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees.
What rekketh me of your auctoritees?
I woot wel that this Iew, this Salomon,
Fond of us wommen foles many oon.
But though that he ne fond no good womman,

Yet hath ther founde many another man
 Wommen ful trewe, ful gode, and vertuous.
 Witnesse on hem that dwelle in Cristes hous,
 With martirdom they preved hir constance.
 The Romain gestes maken remembrance
 Of many a verray trewe wyf also.
 But sire, ne be nat wrooth, al-be-it so,
 Though that he seyde he fond no good womman,
 I prey yow take the sentence of the man;
 He mente thus, that in sovereyn bontee
 Nis noon but god, that sit in Trinitee.
 Ey! for verray god, that nis but oon,
 What make ye so muche of Salomon?
 What though he made a temple, goddes hous?
 What though he were riche and glorious?
 So made he eek a temple of false goddis,
 How mighte he do a thing that more forbode is?
 Pardee, as faire as ye his name emplastre,
 He was a lechour and an ydolastre;
 And in his elde he verray god forsook.
 And if that god ne hadde, as seith the book,
 Y-spared him for his fadres sake, he sholde
 Have lost his regne rather than he wolde.
 I sette noght of al the vileinye,
 That ye of wommen wryte, a boterflye.
 I am a womman, nedes moot I speke,
 Or elles swelle til myn herte breke.
 For sithen he seyde that we ben Iangleresses,
 As ever hool I mote brouke my tresses,
 I shal nat spare, for no curteisye,
 To speke him harm that wolde us vileinye.
 'Dame,' quod this Pluto, 'be no lenger wrooth;
 I yeve it up; but sith I swoor myn ooth
 That I wolde graunten him his sighte ageyn,
 My word shal stonde, I warne yow, certeyn.
 I am a king, it sit me noght to lye.'
 'And I,' quod she, 'a queene of fayërye.
 Hir answer shal she have, I undertake;
 Lat us na-more wordes heer-of make.
 For sothe, I wol no lenger yow contrarie.'
 Now lat us turne agayn to Ianuarie,
 That in the gardin with his faire May
 Singeth, ful merier than the papeiay,
 'Yow love I best, and shal, and other noon.'
 So longe aboute the aleyes is he goon,
 Til he was come agaynes thilke pyrie,
 Wher-as this Damian sitteth fill myrie
 An heigh, among the fresshe leves grene.
 This fresshe May, that is so bright and shene,
 Gan for to syke, and seyde, 'allas, my syde!
 Now sir,' quod she, 'for aught that may bityde,
 I moste han of the peres that I see,
 Or I mot dye, so sore longeth me
 To eten of the smale peres grene.
 Help, for hir love that is of hevene quene!

I telle yow wel, a womman in my plyt
 May han to fruit so greet an appetyt,
 That she may dyen, but she of it have.
 'Allas!' quod he, 'that I ne had heer a knave
 That coude climbe; alas! alas!' quod he,
 'That I am blind.' 'Ye, sir, no fors,' quod she:
 'But wolde ye vouche-sauf, for goddes sake,
 The pyrie inwith your armes for to take,
 (For wel I woot that ye mistruste me)
 Thanne sholde I climbe wel y-nogh,' quod she,
 'So I my foot mighte sette upon your bak.'
 'Certes,' quod he, 'ther-on shal be no lak,
 Mighte I yow helpen with myn herte blood.'
 He stoupeth doun, and on his bak she stood,
 And caughte hir by a twiste, and up she gooth.
 Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth;
 I can nat glose, I am a rude man.
 And sodeynly anon this Damian
 Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng.
 And whan that Pluto saugh this grete wrong,
 To Ianuarie he gaf agayn his sighte,
 And made him see, as wel as ever he mighte.
 And whan that he hadde caught his sighte agayn,
 Ne was ther never man of thing so fayn.
 But on his wyf his thought was evermo;
 Up to the tree he caste his eyen two,
 And saugh that Damian his wyf had dressed
 In swich manere, it may nat ben expressed
 But if I wolde speke uncurteisly:
 And up he yaf a roring and a cry
 As doth the moder whan the child shal dye:
 'Out! help! alas! harrow!' he gan to crye,
 'O stronge lady store, what dostow?'
 And she answerde, 'sir, what eyleth yow?
 Have pacience, and reson in your minde,
 I have yow holpe on bothe your eyen blinde.
 Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,
 As me was taught, to hele with your yën,
 Was no-thing bet to make yow to see
 Than strugle with a man up-on a tree.
 God woot, I dide it in ful good entente.'
 'Strugle!' quod he, 'ye, algate in it wente!
 God yeve yow bothe on shames deeth to dyen!
 He swyved thee, I saugh it with myne yën,
 And elles be I hanged by the hals!'
 'Thanne is,' quod she, 'my medicyne al fals;
 For certainly, if that ye mighte see,
 Ye wolde nat seyn thise wordes un-to me;
 Ye han som glimsing and no parfit sighte.'
 'I see,' quod he, 'as wel as ever I mighte,
 Thonked be god! with bothe myne eyen two,
 And by my trouthe, me thoughte he dide thee so.'
 'Ye maze, maze, gode sire,' quod she,
 'This thank have I for I have maad yow see;
 Allas!' quod she, 'that ever I was so kinde!'

'Now, dame,' quod he, 'lat al passe out of minde.
 Com doun, my lief, and if I have missayd,
 God help me so, as I am yvel apayd.
 But, by my fader soule, I wende han seyn,
 How that this Damian had by thee leyn,
 And that thy smok had leyn up-on his brest.'
 'Ye, sire,' quod she, 'ye may wene as yow lest;
 But, sire, a man that waketh out of his sleep,
 He may nat sodeynly wel taken keep
 Up-on a thing, ne seen it parfitly,
 Til that he be adawed verrailly;
 Right so a man, that longe hath blind y-be,
 Ne may nat sodeynly so wel y-see,
 First whan his sighte is newe come ageyn,
 As he that hath a day or two y-seyn.
 Til that your sighte y-satled be a whyle,
 Ther may ful many a sighte yow bigyle.
 Beth war, I prey yow; for, by hevene king,
 Ful many a man weneth to seen a thing,
 And it is al another than it semeth.
 He that misconceyveth, he misdemeth.'
 And with that word she leep doun fro the tree.
 This Ianuarie, who is glad but he?
 He kisseth hir, and clippeth hir ful ofte,
 And on hir wombe he stroketh hir ful softe,
 And to his palays hoom he hath hir lad.
 Now, gode men, I pray yow to be glad.
 Thus endeth heer my tale of Ianuarie;
 God bless us and his moder Seinte Marie!
Here is ended the Marchantes Tale of Ianuarie.

EPILOGUE TO THE MARCHANTES TALE.

'Ey! goddes mercy!' seyde our Hoste tho,
 'Now swich a wyf I pray god kepe me fro!
 Lo, whiche sleighes and subtilitees
 In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees
 Ben they, us sely men for to deceyve,
 And from a sothe ever wol they weyve;
 By this Marchauntes Tale it preveth weel.
 But doutelees, as trewe as any steel
 I have a wyf, though that she povre be;
 But of hir tonge a labbing shrewe is she,
 And yet she hath an heap of vyces mo;
 Ther-of no fors, lat alle swiche thinges go.
 But, wite ye what? in conseil be it seyde,
 Me reweth sore I am un-to hir teyd.
 For, and I sholde rekenen every vyce
 Which that she hath, y-wis, I were to nyce,
 And cause why; it sholde reported be
 And told to hir of somme of this meynce;
 Of whom, it nedeth nat for to declare,
 Sin wommen connen outen swich chaffare;
 And eek my wit suffyseth nat ther-to
 To tellen al; wherfor my tale is do.'

THE SQUIERES TALE.

[The Squire's Prologue.]

'Squier, com neer, if it your wille be,
 And sey somewhat of love; for, certes, ye
 Connen ther-on as mucche as any man.'
 'Nay, sir,' quod he, 'but I wol seye as I can
 With hertly wille; for I wol nat rebelle
 Agayn your lust; a tale wol I telle.
 Have me excused if I speke amis,
 My wil is good; and lo, my tale is this.

Here biginneth the Squieres Tale.

At Sarray, in the land of Tartarye,
 Ther dwelte a king, that werreyed Russye,
 Thurgh which ther deyde many a doughty man.
 This noble king was cleped Cambinskan,
 Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun
 That ther nas no-wher in no regioun
 So excellent a lord in alle thing;
 Him lakked noght that longeth to a king.
 As of the secte of which that he was born
 He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn;
 And ther-to be was hardy, wys, and riche,
 Pitous and Iust, and ever-more y-liche
 Sooth of his word, benigne and honorable,
 Of his corage as any centre stable;
 Yong, fresh, and strong, in armes desirous
 As any bachelor of al his hous.
 A fair persone he was and fortunat,
 And kepte alwey so wel royal estat,
 That ther was nowher swich another man.
 This noble king, this Tartre Cambinskan
 Hadde two sones on Elpheta his wyf,
 Of whiche the eldeste highte Algarsyf,
 That other sone was cleped Cambalo.
 A doghter hadde this worthy king also,
 That yongest was, and highte Canacee.
 But for to telle yow al hir beautee,
 It lyth nat in my tonge, nin my conning;
 I dar nat undertake so heigh a thing.
 Myn English eek is insufficient;
 It moste been a rethor excellent,
 That coude his colours longing for that art,
 If he sholde hir discryven every part.
 I am non swich, I moot speke as I can.
 And so bifel that, whan this Cambinskan
 Hath twenty winter born his diademe,
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,
 He leet the feste of his nativitee
 Don cryen thurghout Sarray his citee,
 The last Idus of March, after the yeer.
 Phebus the sonne ful Iory was and cleer;
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun
 In Martes face, and in his mansioun
 In Aries, the colerik hote signe.

Ful lusty was the weder and benigne,
 For which the foules, agayn the sonne shene,
 What for the seson and the yonge grene,
 Ful loude songen hir affeccions;
 Him semed han geten hem protecciouns
 Agayn the swerd of winter kene and cold.
 This Cambinskan, of which I have yow told,
 In royal vestiment sit on his deys,
 With diademe, ful heighe in his paleys,
 And halt his feste, so solempne and so riche
 That in this world ne was ther noon it liche.
 Of which if I shal tellen al tharray,
 Than wolde it occupye a someres day;
 And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse
 At every cours the ordre of hir servyse.
 I wol nat tellen of hir strange sewes,
 Ne of hir swannes, ne of hir heronsewes.
 Eek in that lond, as tellen knightes olde,
 Ther is som mete that is ful deyntee holde,
 That in this lond men recche of it but smal;
 Ther nis no man that may reporten al.
 I wol nat tarien yow, for it is pryme,
 And for it is no fruit but los of tyme;
 Un-to my firste I wol have my recours.
 And so bifel that, after the thridde cours,
 Whyl that this king sit thus in his nobleye,
 Herkninge his minstralles hir thinges pleye
 Biforn him at the bord deliciously,
 In at the halle-dore al sodeynly
 Ther cam a knight up-on a stede of bras,
 And in his hand a brood mirour of glas.
 Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,
 And by his syde a naked swerd hanging;
 And up he rydeth to the heighe bord.
 In al the halle ne was ther spoke a word
 For merveille of this knight; him to biholde
 Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.
 This strange knight, that cam thus sodeynly,
 Al armed save his heed ful richely,
 Salueth king and queen, and lordes alle,
 By ordre, as they seten in the halle,
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce
 As wel in speche as in contenaunce,
 That Gawain, with his olde curteisye,
 Though he were come ageyn out of Fairye,
 Ne coude him nat amende with a word.
 And after this, biforn the heighe bord,
 He with a manly voys seith his message,
 After the forme used in his langage,
 With-oute vyce of sillable or of lettre;
 And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
 Accordant to his wordes was his chere,
 As techeth art of speche hem that it lere;
 Al-be-it that I can nat sounne his style,
 Ne can nat climben over so heigh a style,

Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,
Thus muche amounteth al that ever he mente,
If it so be that I have it in minde.
He seyde, 'the king of Arabie and of Inde,
My lige lord, on this solempne day
Salueth yow as he best can and may,
And sendeth yow, in honour of your feste,
By me, that am al redy at your heste,
This stede of bras, that esily and wel
Can, in the space of o day naturel,
This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,
Wher-so yow list, in droghte or elles shoures,
Beren your body in-to every place
To which your herte wilneth for to pace
With-outen wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair;
Or, if yow list to fleen as hye in the air
As doth an egle, whan him list to sore,
This same stede shal bere yow ever-more
With-outen harm, til ye be ther yow leste,
Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste;
And turne ayeyn, with wrything of a pin.
He that it wroghte coude ful many a gin;
He wayted many a constellacioun
Er he had doon this operacioun;
And knew ful many a seel and many a bond.
This mirour eek, that I have in myn hond,
Hath swich a might, that men may in it see
Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee
Un-to your regne or to your-self also;
And openly who is your freend or foo.
And over al this, if any lady bright
Hath set hir herte on any maner wight,
If he be fals, she shal his treson see,
His newe love and al his subtiltee
So openly, that ther shal no-thing hyde.
Wherfor, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
This mirour and this ring, that ye may see,
He hath sent to my lady Canacee,
Your excellent doghter that is here.
The vertu of the ring, if ye wol here,
Is this; that, if hir lust it for to were
Up-on hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,
Ther is no foul that fleeth under the hevene
That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
And knowe his mening openly and pleyn,
And answer him in his langage ageyn.
And every gras that groweth up-on rote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do bote,
Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde.
This naked swerd, that hangeth by my syde,
Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye smyte,
Thurgh-out his armure it wol kerve and byte,
Were it as thikke as is a branched ook;
And what man that is wounded with the strook
Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,

To stroke him with the platte in thilke place
 Ther he is hurt: this is as mucche to seyn,
 Ye mote with the platte swerd ageyn
 Stroke him in the wounde, and it wol close;
 This is a verray sooth, with-outen glose,
 It failleth nat whyl it is in your hold.
 And whan this knight hath thus his tale told,
 He rydeth out of halle, and doun he lighte.
 His stede, which that shoon as sonne brighte,
 Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.
 This knight is to his chambre lad anon,
 And is unarmed and to mete y-set.
 The presentes ben ful royally y-fet,
 This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,
 And born anon in-to the heighe tour
 With certeine officers ordeyned therfore;
 And un-to Canacee this ring was bore
 Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.
 But sikerly, with-oute any fable,
 The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,
 It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed.
 Ther may no man out of the place it dryve
 For noon engyn of windas or polyve;
 And cause why, for they can nat the craft.
 And therefore in the place they han it laft
 Til that the knight hath taught hem the manere
 To voyden him, as ye shal after here.
 Greet was the prees, that swarmeth to and fro,
 To gauren on this hors that stondest so;
 For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,
 So wel proporcioned for to ben strong,
 Right as it were a stede of Lombardye;
 Ther-with so horsly, and so quik of yē
 As it a gentil Poileys courser were.
 For certes, fro his tayl un-to his ere,
 Nature ne art ne coude him nat amende
 In no degree, as al the peple wende.
 But evermore hir moste wonder was,
 How that it coude goon, and was of bras;
 It was of Fairye, as the peple semed.
 Diverse folk diversely they demed;
 As many hedes, as many wittes ther been.
 They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,
 And maden skiles after hir fantasieses,
 Rehersinge of thise olde poetryes,
 And seyden, it was lyk the Pegasee,
 The hors that hadde winges for to flee;
 Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synon,
 That broghte Troye to destruccion,
 As men may in thise olde gestes rede,
 'Myn herte,' quod oon, 'is evermore in drede;
 I trowe som men of armes been ther-inne,
 That shapen hem this citee for to winne.
 It were right good that al swich thing were knowe.'
 Another rownded to his felawe lowe,

And seyde, 'he lyeth, it is rather lyk
An apparence y-maad by som magyk,
As Iogelours pleyen at thise festes grete.'
Of sondry doutes thus they Iangle and trete,
As lewed peple demeth comunly
Of thinges that ben maad more subtilly
Than they can in her lewednes comprehende;
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And somme of hem wondred on the mirour,
That born was up in-to the maister-tour,
How men mighte in it swiche thinges see.
Another answerde, and seyde it mighte wel be
Naturelly, by composiciouns
Of angles and of slye reflexiouns,
And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.
They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves
Of queynte mirours and of prospectyves,
As knowen they that han hir bokes herd.
And othere folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde percen thurgh-out every-thing;
And fille in speche of Thelophus the king,
And of Achilles with his queynte spere,
For he coude with it bothe hele and dere,
Right in swich wyse as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye han your-selven herd.
They speken of sondry harding of metal,
And speke of medicynes ther-with-al,
And how, and whanne, it sholde y-harded be;
Which is unknowe algates unto me.
Tho speke they of Canaceës ring,
And seyden alle, that swich a wonder thing
Of craft of ringes herde they never non,
Save that he, Moyses, and king Salomon
Hadde a name of konning in swich art.
Thus seyn the peple, and drawen hem apart.
But nathelees, somme seyden that it was
Wonder to maken of fern-asshen glas,
And yet nis glas nat lyk asshen of fern;
But for they han y-knowen it so fern,
Therfore cesseth her Iangling and her wonder.
As sore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on mist,
And alle thing, til that the cause is wist.
Thus Iangle they and demen and devyse,
Til that the king gan fro the bord aryse.
Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,
And yet ascending was the beest royal,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran,
Whan that this Tartre king, this Cambynskan,
Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hye.
Toforn him gooth the loude minstralcy,
Til he cam to his chambre of parements,
Ther as they sownen diverse instruments,
That it is lyk an heven for to here.

Now dauncen lusty Venus children dere,
 For in the Fish hir lady sat ful hye,
 And loketh on hem with a freendly yē.
 This noble king is set up in his trone.
 This strange knight is fet to him ful sone,
 And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.
 Heer is the revel and the Iolitee
 That is nat able a dul man to devyse.
 He moste han knowen love and his servyse,
 And been a festlich man as fresh as May,
 That sholde yow devysen swich array.
 Who coude telle yow the forme of daunces,
 So uncouth and so fresshe contenaunces,
 Swich subtil loking and dissimulinges
 For drede of Ialouse mennes aperceyvinges?
 No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.
 Therefor I passe of al this lustiheed;
 I seye na-more, but in this Iolynesse
 I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse.
 The styward bit the spyces for to hye,
 And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.
 The usshers and the squyers ben y-goon;
 The spyces and the wyn is come anoon.
 They ete and drinke; and whan this hadde an ende,
 Un-to the temple, as reson was, they wende.
 The service doon, they soupen al by day.
 What nedeth yow rehercen hir array?
 Ech man wot wel, that at a kinges feeste
 Hath plentee, to the moste and to the leeste,
 And deyntees mo than been in my knowing.
 At-after soper gooth this noble king
 To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
 Of lordes and of ladyes him aboute.
 Swich wondring was ther on this hors of bras
 That, sin the grete sege of Troye was,
 Ther-as men wondreden on an hors also,
 Ne was ther swich a wondring as was tho.
 But fynally the king axeth this knight
 The vertu of this courser and the might,
 And preyede him to telle his governaunce.
 This hors anoon bigan to trippe and daunce,
 Whan that this knight leyde hand up-on his reyne,
 And seyde, 'sir, ther is na-more to seyne,
 But, whan yow list to ryden any-where,
 Ye moten trille a pin, stant in his ere,
 Which I shall telle yow bitwix vs two.
 Ye mote nempne him to what place also
 Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.
 And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde,
 Bidde him descende, and trille another pin,
 For ther-in lyth the effect of al the gin,
 And he wol down descende and doon your wille;
 And in that place he wol abyde stille,
 Though al the world the contrarie hadde y-swore;
 He shal nat thennes ben y-drawe ne y-bore.

Or, if yow liste bidde him thennes goon,
 Trille this pin, and he wol vanishe anoon
 Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
 And come agayn, be it by day or night,
 When that yow list to clepen him ageyn
 In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn
 Bitwixe yow and me, and that ful sone.
 Ryde whan yow list, ther is na-more to done.
 Enformed whan the king was of that knight,
 And hath conceyved in his wit aright
 The maner and the forme of al this thing,
 Thus glad and blythe, this noble doughty king
 Repeireth to his revel as biforn.
 The brydel is un-to the tour y-born,
 And kept among his Jewels leve and dere.
 The hors vanissed, I noot in what manere,
 Out of hir sighte; ye gete na-more of me.
 But thus I lete in lust and Iolitee
 This Cambynskan his lordes festeynge,
 Til wel ny the day bigan to springe.

Explicit prima pars. Sequitur pars secunda.

The norice of digestioun, the slepe,
 Gan on hem winke, and bad hem taken kepe,
 That muchel drink and labour wolde han reste;
 And with a galping mouth hem alle he keste,
 And seyde, 'it was tyme to lye adoun,
 For blood was in his dominacioun;
 Cherissheth blood, natures freend,' quod he.
 They thanken him galpinge, by two, by three,
 And every wight gan drawe him to his reste,
 As slepe hem bad; they toke it for the beste.
 Hir dremes shul nat been y-told for me;
 Ful were hir hedes of fumositee,
 That causeth dreem, of which ther nis no charge.
 They slepen til that it was pryme large,
 The moste part, but it were Canacee;
 She was ful mesurable, as wommen be.
 For of hir fader hadde she take leve
 To gon to reste, sone after it was eve;
 Hir liste nat appalled for to be,
 Nor on the morwe unfestlich for to see;
 And slepte hir firste sleep, and thanne awook.
 For swich a loye she in hir herte took
 Both of hir queynte ring and hir mirour,
 That twenty tyme she changed hir colour;
 And in hir slepe, right for impressioun
 Of hir mirour, she hadde a visioun.
 Wherefore, er that the sonne gan up glyde,
 She cleped on hir maistresse hir bisyde,
 And seyde, that hir liste for to ryse.
 Thise olde wommen that been gladly wyse,
 As is hir maistresse, answerde hir anoon,
 And seyde, 'madame, whider wil ye goon
 Thus erly? for the folk ben alle on reste.'
 'I wol,' quod she, 'aryse, for me leste

No lenger for to slepe, and walke aboute.
 Hir maistresse clepeth wommen a gret route,
 And up they rysen, wel a ten or twelve;
 Up ryseth fresshe Canacee hir-selve,
 As rody and bright as dooth the yonge sonne,
 That in the Ram is four degrees up-ronne;
 Noon hyer was he, whan she redy was;
 And forth she walketh esily a pas,
 Arrayed after the lusty seson sote
 Lightly, for to pleye and walke on fote;
 Nat but with fyve or six of hir meynne;
 And in a trench, forth in the park, goth she.
 The vapour, which that fro the erthe glood,
 Made the sonne to seme rody and brood;
 But nathelees, it was so fair a sighte
 That it made alle hir hertes for to lighte,
 What for the seson and the morweninge,
 And for the foules that she herde singe;
 For right anon she wiste what they mente
 Right by hir song, and knew al hir entente.
 The knotte, why that every tale is told,
 If it be taried til that lust be cold
 Of hem that han it after herkned yore,
 The savour passeth ever lenger the more,
 For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee.
 And by the same reson thinketh me,
 I sholde to the knotte condescende,
 And maken of hir walking sone an ende.
 Amidde a tree fordrye, as whyt as chalk,
 As Canacee was pleying in hir walk,
 Ther sat a faucon over hir heed ful hye,
 That with a pitous voys so gan to crye
 That all the wode resounded of hir cry.
 Y-beten hath she hir-self so pitously
 With bothe hir winges, til the rede blood
 Ran endelong the tree ther-as she stood.
 And ever in oon she cryde alwey and shrighthe,
 And with hir beek hir-selven so she prighthe,
 That ther nis tygre, ne noon so cruel beste,
 That dwelleth either in wode or in foreste
 That nolde han wept, if that he wepe coude,
 For sorwe of hir, she shrighthe alwey so loude.
 For ther nas never yet no man on lyve—
 If that I coude a faucon wel discryve—
 That herde of swich another of fairnesse,
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse
 Of shap, and al that mighte y-rekened be.
 A faucon peregryn than semed she
 Of fremde land; and evermore, as she stood,
 She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood,
 Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree.
 This faire kinges doghter, Canacee,
 That on hir finger bar the queynte ring,
 Thurgh which she understood wel every thing
 That any foul may in his ledene seyn,

And coude answer him in his ledene ageyn,
Hath understonde what this faucon seyde,
And wel neigh for the rewthe almost she deyde.
And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,
And on this faucon loketh pitously,
And heeld hir lappe abroad, for wel she wiste
The faucon moste fallen fro the twiste,
When that it swowned next, for lakke of blood.
A longe while to wayten hir she stood
Till atte laste she spak in this manere
Un-to the hauk, as ye shul after here.
'What is the cause, if it be for to telle,
That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?'
Quod Canacee un-to this hauk above.
'Is this for sorwe of deeth or los of love?
For, as I trowe, thise ben causes two
That causen moost a gentil herte wo;
Of other harm it nedeth nat to speke.
For ye your-self upon your-self yow wreke,
Which proveth wel, that either love or drede
Mot been encheson of your cruel dede,
Sin that I see non other wight yow chace.
For love of god, as dooth your-selven grace
Or what may ben your help; for west nor eest
Ne sey I never er now no brid ne beest
That ferde with him-self so pitously.
Ye sle me with your sorwe, verrailly;
I have of yow so gret compassioun.
For goddes love, com fro the tree adoun;
And, as I am a kinges doghter trewe,
If that I verrailly the cause knewe
Of your disese, if it lay in my might,
I wolde amende it, er that it were night,
As wisly helpe me gret god of kinde!
And herbes shal I right y-nowe y-finde
To hele with your hurtes hastily.'
Tho shrighthe this faucon more pitously
Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde anoon,
And lyth aswowne, deed, and lyk a stoon,
Til Canacee hath in hir lappe hir take
Un-to the tyme she gan of swough awake.
And, after that she of hir swough gan breyde,
Right in hir haukes ledene thus she seyde:—
'That pitee renneth sone in gentil herte,
Feling his similitude in peynes smerte,
Is preved al-day, as men may it see,
As wel by werk as by auctoritee;
For gentil herte kytheth gentillesse.
I see wel, that ye han of my distresse
Compassioun, my faire Canacee,
Of verray wommanly benignitee
That nature in your principles hath set.
But for non hope for to fare the bet,
But for to obeye un-to your herte free,
And for to maken other be war by me,

As by the whelp chasted is the leoun,
 Right for that cause and that conclusioun,
 Whyl that I have a leyser and a space,
 Myn harm I wol confessen, er I pace.
 And ever, whyl that oon hir sorwe tolde,
 That other weep, as she to water wolde,
 Til that the faucon bad hir to be stille;
 And, with a syk, right thus she seyde hir wille.
 'Ther I was bred (allas! that harde day!)
 And fostred in a roche of marbul gray
 So tendrely, that nothing eyled me,
 I niste nat what was adversitee,
 Til I coude flee ful hye under the sky.
 Tho dwelte a tercelet me faste by,
 That semed welle of alle gentillesse;
 Al were he ful of treson and falsnesse,
 It was so wrapped under humble chere,
 And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,
 Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,
 That no wight coude han wend he coude feyne,
 So depe in greyn he dyed his coloures.
 Right as a serpent hit him under floures
 Til he may seen his tyme for to byte,
 Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,
 Doth so his cerimonies and obeisaunces,
 And kepeth in semblant alle his observances
 That sowneth in-to gentillesse of love.
 As in a tounge is al the faire above,
 And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,
 Swich was this ypocryte, bothe cold and hoot,
 And in this wyse he served his entente,
 That (save the feend) non wiste what he mente.
 Til he so longe had wopen and compleyned,
 And many a yeer his service to me feyned,
 Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce,
 Al innocent of his crowned malice,
 For-fered of his deeth, as thoughte me,
 Upon his othes and his seuretee,
 Graunted him love, on this condicioun,
 That evermore myn honour and renoun
 Were saved, bothe privee and apert;
 This is to seyn, that, after his desert,
 I yaf him al myn herte and al my thought—
 God woot and he, that otherwyse noght—
 And took his herte in chaunge for myn for ay.
 But sooth is seyde, gon sithen many a day,
 "A trew wight and a thief thenken nat oon."
 And, whan he saugh the thing so fer y-goon,
 That I had graunted him fully my love,
 In swich a gyse as I have seyde above,
 And yeven him my trewe herte, as free
 As he swoor he his herte yaf to me;
 Anon this tygre, ful of doublenesse,
 Fil on his knees with so devout humblesse,
 With so heigh reverence, and, as by his chere,

So lyk a gentil love of manere,
So ravished, as it semed, for the loye,
That never Iason, ne Parys of Troye,
Iason? certes, ne non other man,
Sin Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan
To loven two, as writen folk biforn,
Ne never, sin the firste man was born,
Ne coude man, by twenty thousand part,
Countrefete the sophimes of his art;
Ne were worthy unbokele his galoche,
Ther doublesnesse or feyning sholde approche,
Ne so coude thanke a wight as he did me!
His maner was an heven for to see
Til any womman, were she never so wys;
So peynted he and kembde at point-devys
As wel his wordes as his contenaunce.
And I so lovede him for his obeisaunce,
And for the trouthe I demed in his herte,
That, if so were that any thing him smerte,
Al were it never so lyte, and I it wiste,
Me thoughte, I felte deeth myn herte twiste.
And shortly, so ferforth this thing is went,
That my wil was his willes instrument;
This is to seyn, my wil obeyed his wil
In alle thing, as fer as reson fil,
Keping the boundes of my worship ever.
Ne never hadde I thing so leef, ne lever,
As him, god woot! ne never shal na-mo.
This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two,
That I supposed of him noght but good.
But fynally, thus atte laste it stood,
That fortune wolde that he moste twinne
Out of that place which that I was inne.
Wher me was wo, that is no questioun;
I can nat make of it discripcioun;
For o thing dar I tellen boldely,
I knowe what is the peyne of deth ther-by;
Swich harm I felte for he ne mighte bileve.
So on a day of me he took his leve,
So sorwefully eek, that I wende verrailly
That he had felt as muche harm as I,
Whan that I herde him speke, and saugh his hewe.
But nathelees, I thoughte he was so trewe,
And eek that he repaire sholde ageyn
With-inne a litel whyle, sooth to seyn;
And reson wolde eek that he moste go
For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,
That I made vertu of necessitee,
And took it wel, sin that it moste be.
As I best mighte, I hidde fro him my sorwe,
And took him by the hond, seint Iohn to borwe,
And seyde him thus: "lo, I am youre al;
Beth swich as I to yow have been, and shal."
What he answerde, it nedeth noght reherce,
Who can sey bet than he, who can do werse?

Whan he hath al wel seyde, thanne hath he doon.
 "Therfor bihoveth him a ful long spoon
 That shal ete with a feend," thus herde I seye.
 So atte laste he moste forth his weye,
 And forth he fleeth, til he cam ther him leste.
 Whan it cam him to purpos for to reste,
 I trowe he hadde thilke text in minde,
 That "alle thing, repairing to his kinde,
 Gladeth him-self"; thus seyn men, as I gesse;
 Men loven of propre kinde newfangelnesse,
 As briddes doon that men in cages fede.
 For though thou night and day take of hem hede,
 And strawe hir cage faire and softe as silk,
 And yeve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,
 Yet right anon, as that his dore is uppe,
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,
 And to the wode he wol and wormes ete;
 So newefangel been they of hir mete,
 And loven novelryes of propre kinde;
 No gentillesse of blood [ne] may hem binde.
 So ferde this tercelet, alas the day!
 Though he were gentil born, and fresh and gay,
 And goodly for to seen, and humble and free,
 He saugh up-on a tyme a kyte flee,
 And sodeynly he loved this kyte so,
 That al his love is clene fro me ago,
 And hath his trouthe falsed in this wyse;
 Thus hath the kyte my love in hir servyse,
 And I am lorn with-outen remedye!
 And with that word this faucon gan to crye,
 And swowned eft in Canaceës barme.
 Greet was the sorwe, for the haukes harme,
 That Canacee and alle hir wommen made;
 They niste how they mighte the faucon glade.
 But Canacee hom bereth hir in hir lappe,
 And softly in plastres gan hir wrappe,
 Ther as she with hir beek had hurt hir-selve.
 Now can nat Canacee but herbes delve
 Out of the grounde, and make salves newe
 Of herbes precious, and fyne of hewe,
 To helen with this hauk; fro day to night
 She dooth hir bisnesse and al hir might.
 And by hir beddes heed she made a mewe,
 And covered it with veluëttes blewe,
 In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene.
 And al with-oute, the mewe is peynted grene,
 In which were peynted alle thise false foules,
 As beth thise tidifs, terceleets, and oules,
 Right for despyt were peynted hem bisyde,
 And pyes, on hem for to crye and chyde.
 Thus lete I Canacee hir hauk keping;
 I wol na-more as now speke of hir ring,
 Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn
 How that this faucon gat hir love ageyn
 Repentant, as the storie telleth us,

By mediacioun of Cambalus,
 The kinges sone, of whiche I yow tolde.
 But hennes-forth I wol my proces holde
 To speke of adventures and of batailles,
 That never yet was herd so grete mervailles.
 First wol I telle yow of Cambynskan,
 That in his tyme many a citee wan;
 And after wol I speke of Algarsyf,
 How that he wan Theodora to his wyf,
 For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was,
 Ne hadde he ben holpen by the stede of bras;
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo,
 That faught in listes with the bretheren two
 For Canacee, er that he mighte hir winne.
 And ther I lefte I wol ageyn beginne.

Explicit secunda pars. Incipit pars tercia.

Appollo whirleth up his char so hye,
 Til that the god Mercurius hous the slye—

**Here folwen the wordes of the Frankelin to the Squier,
 and the wordes of the Host to the Frankelin.**

'In feith, Squier, thou hast thee wel y-quit,
 And gentilly I preise wel thy wit,'
 Quod the Frankeleyn, 'considering thy youthe,
 So feelingly thou spekest, sir, I allow the!
 As to my doom, there is non that is here
 Of eloquence that shal be thy pere,
 If that thou live; god yeve thee good chaunce,
 And in vertu sende thee continuaunce!
 For of thy speche I have greet deyntee.
 I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee,
 I hadde lever than twenty pound worth lond,
 Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,
 He were a man of swich discrecioun
 As that ye been! fy on possessioun
 But-if a man be vertuous with-al.
 I have my sone snibbed, and yet shal,
 For he to vertu listeth nat entende;
 But for to pleye at dees, and to despende,
 And lese al that he hath, is his usage.
 And he hath lever talken with a page
 Than to comune with any gentil wight
 Ther he mighte lerne gentillesse aright.'—
 'Straw for your gentillesse,' quod our host;
 'What, frankeleyn? pardee, sir, wel thou wost
 That eche of yow mot tellen atte leste
 A tale or two, or breken his biheste.'
 'That knowe I wel, sir,' quod the frankeleyn;
 'I prey yow, haveth me nat in desdeyn
 Though to this man I speke a word or two.'
 'Telle on thy tale with-oute wordes mo.'
 'Gladly, sir host,' quod he, 'I wol obeye
 Un-to your wil; now herkneth what I seye.
 I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse
 As fer as that my wittes wol suffyse;

I prey to god that it may plesen yow,
Than woot I wel that it is good y-now.'

THE FRANKLIN'S PROLOGUE.

The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale.

Thise olde gentil Britons in hir dayes
Of diverse adventures maden layes,
Rymeyed in hir firste Briton tonge;
Which layes with hir instruments they songe,
Or elles redden hem for hir plesaunce;
And oon of hem have I in remembraunce,
Which I shal seyn with good wil as I can.
But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,
At my biginning first I yow biseche
Have me excused of my rude speche;
I lerned never rethoryk certeyn;
Thing that I speke, it moot be bare and pleyn.
I sleep never on the mount of Pernaso,
Ne lerned Marcus Tullius Cithero.
Colours ne knowe I none, with-oute drede,
But swiche colours as growen in the mede,
Or elles swiche as men dye or peynte.
Colours of rethoryk ben me to queynte;
My spirit feleth noght of swich matere.
But if yow list, my tale shul ye here.

THE FRANKELEYNS TALE.

Here biginneth the Frankeleyns Tale.

In Armorik, that called is Britayne,
Ther was a knight that loved and dide his payne
To serve a lady in his beste wyse;
And many a labour, many a greet emprise
He for his lady wroghte, er she were wonne.
For she was oon, the faireste under sonne,
And eek therto come of so heigh kinrede,
That wel unnethes dorste this knight, for drede,
Telle hir his wo, his peyne, and his distresse.
But atte laste, she, for his worthinesse,
And namely for his meke obeysaunce,
Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce,
That prively she fil of his accord
To take him for hir housbonde and hir lord,
Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wyves;
And for to lede the more in blisse hir lyves,
Of his free wil he swoor hir as a knight,
That never in al his lyf he, day ne night,
Ne sholde up-on him take no maistrye
Agayn hir wil, ne kythe hir Ialousye,
But hir obeye, and folwe hir wil in al
As any love to his lady shal;
Save that the name of soveraynetee,
That wolde he have for shame of his degree.
She thanked him, and with ful greet humblesse
She seyde, 'sire, sith of your gentillesse

Ye profre me to have so large a reyne,
Ne wolde never god bitwixe us tweyne,
As in my gilt, were outhere werre or stryf.
Sir, I wol be your humble trewe wyf,
Have heer my trouthe, til that myn herte breste.
Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste.
For o thing, sires, sauflly dar I seye,
That frendes everich other moot obeye,
If they wol longe holden companye.
Love wol nat ben constreyned by maistrie;
Whan maistrie comth, the god of love anon
Beteth hise winges, and farewell! he is gon!
Love is a thing as any spirit free;
Wommen of kinde desiren libertee,
And nat to ben constreyned as a thral;
And so don men, if I soth seyen shal.
Loke who that is most pacient in love,
He is at his advantage al above.
Pacience is an heigh vertu certeyn;
For it venquisseth, as thise clerkes seyn,
Things that rigour sholde never atteyne.
For every word men may nat chide or pleyne.
Lerneth to suffre, or elles, so moot I goon,
Ye shul it lerne, wher-so ye wole or noon.
For in this world, certein, ther no wight is,
That he ne dooth or seith som-tyme amis.
Ire, siknesse, or constellacioun,
Wyn, wo, or chaunginge of complexioun
Causeth ful ofte to doon amis or speken.
On every wrong a man may nat be wroken;
After the tyme, moste be temperaunce
To every wight that can on governaunce.
And therfore hath this wyse worthy knight,
To live in ese, suffrance hir bihight,
And she to him ful wisly gan to swere
That never sholde ther be defaute in here.
Heer may men seen an humble wys accord;
Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,
Servant in love, and lord in mariage;
Than was he bothe in lordship and servage;
Servage? nay, but in lordshipe above,
Sith he hath bothe his lady and his love;
His lady, certes, and his wyf also,
The which that lawe of love acordeth to.
And whan he was in this prosperitee,
Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree,
Nat fer fro Penmark, ther his dwelling was,
Wher-as he liveth in blisse and in solas.
Who coude telle, but he had wedded be,
The Ioye, the ese, and the prosperitee
That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf?
A yeer and more lasted this blisful lyf,
Til that the knight of which I speke of thus,
That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,
Shoop him to goon, and dwelle a yeer or tweyne

In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne,
 To seke in armes worship and honour;
 For al his lust he sette in swich labour;
 And dwelled ther two yeer, the book seith thus.
 Now wol I stinte of this Arveragus,
 And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf,
 That loveth hir housbonde as hir hertes lyf.
 For his absence wepeth she and syketh,
 As doon thise noble wyves whan hem lyketh.
 She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth;
 Desyr of his presence hir so distreyneth,
 That al this wyde world she sette at noght.
 Hir frendes, whiche that knewe hir hevy thoght,
 Conforten hir in al that ever they may;
 They prechen hir, they telle hir night and day,
 That causelees she sleeth hir-self, alas!
 And every confort possible in this cas
 They doon to hir with al hir bisnesse,
 Al for to make hir leve hir hevinesse.
 By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,
 Men may so longe graven in a stoon,
 Til som figure ther-inne emprented be.
 So longe han they comforted hir, til she
 Receyved hath, by hope and by resoun,
 The emprenting of hir consolacioun,
 Thurgh which hir grete sorwe gan aswage;
 She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.
 And eek Arveragus, in al this care,
 Hath sent hir lettres hoom of his welfare,
 And that he wol come hastily agayn;
 Or elles hadde this sorwe hir herte slayn.
 Hir freendes sawe hir sorwe gan to slake,
 And preyede hir on knees, for goddes sake,
 To come and romen hir in companye,
 Away to dryve hir derke fantasye.
 And finally, she graunted that requeste;
 For wel she saugh that it was for the beste.
 Now stood hir castel faste by the see,
 And often with hir freendes walketh she
 Hir to disporte up-on the bank an heigh,
 Wher-as she many a ship and barge seigh
 Seilinge hir cours, wher-as hem liste go;
 But than was that a parcel of hir wo.
 For to hir-self ful ofte 'allas!' seith she,
 'Is ther no ship, of so manye as I see,
 Wol bringen hom my lord? than were myn herte
 Al warissshed of his bittre peynes smerte.'
 Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and thinke,
 And caste hir eyen downward fro the brinke.
 But whan she saugh the grisly rokkes blake,
 For verray fere so wolde hir herte quake,
 That on hir feet she mighte hir noght sustene.
 Than wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,
 And pitously in-to the see biholde,
 And seyn right thus, with sorweful sykes colde:

'Eterne god, that thurgh thy purveyaunce
Ledest the world by certein governaunce,
In ydel, as men seyn, ye no-thing make;
But, lord, thise grisly feendly rokkes blake,
That semen rather a foul confusioun
Of werk than any fair creacioun
Of swich a parfit wys god and a stable,
Why han ye wroght this werk unresonable?
For by this werk, south, north, ne west, ne eest,
Ther nis y-fostred man, ne brid, ne beest;
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth.
See ye nat, lord, how mankinde it destroyeth?
An hundred thousand bodies of mankinde
Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in minde,
Which mankinde is so fair part of thy werk
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk.
Than semed it ye hadde a greet chiertee
Toward mankinde; but how than may it be
That ye swiche menes make it to destroyen,
Whiche menes do no good, but ever anoyen?
I wool wel clerkes wol seyn, as hem leste,
By arguments, that al is for the beste,
Though I ne can the causes nat y-knowe.
But thilke god, that made wind to blowe,
As kepe my lord! this my conclusioun;
To clerkes lete I al disputioun.
But wolde god that alle thise rokkes blake
Were sonken in-to helle for his sake!
Thise rokkes sleen myn herte for the fere.'
Thus wolde she seyn, with many a pitous tere.
Hir freendes sawe that it was no disport
To romen by the see, but discomfort;
And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.
They leden hir by riveres and by welles,
And eek in othere places delitables;
They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables.
So on a day, right in the morwe-tyde,
Un-to a gardin that was ther bisyde,
In which that they had maad hir ordinaunce
Of vitaille and of other purveyaunce,
They goon and pleye hem al the longe day.
And this was on the sixte morwe of May,
Which May had peynted with his softe shoures
This gardin ful of leves and of floures;
And craft of mannes hand so curiously
Arrayed hadde this gardin, trewely,
That never was ther gardin of swich prys,
But-if it were the verray paradys.
The odour of floures and the fresshe sighte
Wolde han maad any herte for to lighte
That ever was born, but-if to gret siknesse,
Or to gret sorwe helde it in distresse;
So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.
At-after diner gonne they to daunce,
And singe also, save Dorigen allone,

Which made alwey hir compleint and hir mone;
 For she ne saugh him on the daunce go,
 That was hir housbonde and hir love also.
 But nathelees she moste a tyme abyde,
 And with good hope lete hir sorwe slyde.
 Up-on this daunce, amonges othere men,
 Daunced a squyer biforen Dorigen,
 That fressher was and Iolyer of array,
 As to my doom, than is the monthe of May.
 He singeth, daunceth, passinge any man
 That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.
 Ther-with he was, if men sholde him discryve,
 Oon of the beste faringe man on-lyve;
 Yong, strong, right vertuuous, and riche and wys,
 And wel biloved, and holden in gret prys.
 And shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal,
 Unwiting of this Dorigen at al,
 This lusty squyer, servant to Venus,
 Which that y-cleped was Aurelius,
 Had loved hir best of any creature
 Two yeer and more, as was his aventure,
 But never dorste he telle hir his grevaunce;
 With-uten coppe he drank al his penaunce.
 He was despeyred, no-thing dorste he seye,
 Save in his songes somewhat wolde he wreye
 His wo, as in a general compleyning;
 He seyde he lovede, and was biloved no-thing.
 Of swich matere made he manye layes,
 Songes, compleintes, roundels, virelayes,
 How that he dorste nat his sorwe telle,
 But languishsheth, as a furie dooth in helle;
 And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko
 For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.
 In other manere than ye here me seye,
 Ne dorste he nat to hir his wo biwreye;
 Save that, paraventure, som-tyme at daunces,
 Ther yonge folk kepen hir observaunces,
 It may wel be he loked on hir face
 In swich a wyse, as man that asketh grace;
 But no-thing wiste she of his entente.
 Nathelees, it happed, er they thennes wente,
 By-cause that he was hir neighebour,
 And was a man of worship and honour,
 And hadde y-knowen him of tyme yore,
 They fille in speche; and forth more and more
 Un-to his purpos drough Aurelius,
 And whan he saugh his tyme, he seyde thus:
 'Madame,' quod he, 'by god that this world made,
 So that I wiste it mighte your herte glade,
 I wolde, that day that your Arveragus
 Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius,
 Had went ther never I sholde have come agayn;
 For wel I woot my service is in vayn.
 My guerdon is but bresting of myn herte;
 Madame, reweth upon my peynes smerte;

For with a word ye may me sleen or save,
Heer at your feet god wolde that I were grave!
I ne have as now no leyser more to seye;
Have mercy, swete, or ye wol do me deye!’
She gan to loke up-on Aurelius:
’Is this your wil,’ quod she, ’and sey ye thus?
Never erst,’ quod she, ’ne wiste I what ye mente.
But now, Aurelie, I knowe your entente,
By thilke god that yaf me soule and lyf,
Ne shal I never been untrewre wyf
In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit:
I wol ben his to whom that I am knit;
Tak this for fynal answer as of me.’
But after that in pley thus seyde she:
’Aurelie,’ quod she, ’by heighe god above,
Yet wolde I graunte yow to been your love,
Sin I yow see so pitously complayne;
Loke what day that, endelong Britayne,
Ye remoeve alle the rokkes, stoon by stoon,
That they ne lette ship ne boot to goon—
I seye, whan ye han maad the coost so clene
Of rokkes, that ther nis no stoon y-sene,
Than wol I love yow best of any man;
Have heer my trouthe in al that ever I can.’
’Is ther non other grace in yow,’ quod he.
’No, by that lord,’ quod she, ’that maked me!
For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.
Lat swiche folies out of your herte slyde.
What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf
For to go love another mannes wyf,
That hath hir body whan so that him lyketh?’
Aurelius ful ofte sore syketh;
Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,
And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde:
’Madame,’ quod he, ’this were an impossible!
Than moot I dye of sodein deth horrible.’
And with that word he turned him anoon.
Tho come hir othere freendes many oon,
And in the aleyes romeden up and down,
And no-thing wiste of this conclusioun,
But sodeinly bigonne revel newe
Til that the brighte sonne loste his hewe;
For thorisonte hath reft the sonne his light;
This is as muche to seye as it was night.
And hoom they goon in Ioye and in solas,
Save only wrecche Aurelius, allas!
He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte;
He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte.
Him semed that he felte his herte colde;
Up to the hevene his handes he gan holde,
And on his knowes bare he sette him down,
And in his raving seyde his orisoun.
For verray wo out of his wit he breyde.
He niste what he spak, but thus he seyde;
With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne

Un-to the goddes, and first un-to the sonne:
 He seyde, 'Appollo, god and governour
 Of every plaunte, herbe, tree and flour,
 That yevest, after thy declinacioun,
 To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,
 As thyn herberwe chaungeth lowe or hye,
 Lord Phebus, cast thy merciable yē
 On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn.
 Lo, lord! my lady hath my deeth y-sworn
 With-oute gilt, but thy benignitee
 Upon my dedly herte have som pitee!
 For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest,
 Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.
 Now voucheth sauf that I may yow devyse
 How that I may been holpe and in what wyse.
 Your blisful suster, Lucina the shene,
 That of the see is chief goddessse and quene,
 Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,
 Yet emperesse aboven him is she:
 Ye knowen wel, lord, that right as hir desyr
 Is to be quiked and lightned of your fyr,
 For which she folweth yow ful bisily,
 Right so the see desyareth naturelly
 To folwen hir, as she that is goddessse
 Bothe in the see and riveres more and lesse.
 Wherfore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste—
 Do this miracle, or do myn herte breste—
 That now, next at this opposicioun,
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,
 As preyeth hir so greet a flood to bringe,
 That fyve fadme at the leeste it overspringe
 The hyste rokke in Armorik Briteyne;
 And lat this flood endure yeres tweyne;
 Than certes to my lady may I seye:
 "Holdeth your heste, the rokkes been aweye."
 Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me;
 Preye hir she go no faster cours than ye;
 I seye, preyeth your suster that she go
 No faster cours than ye thise yeres two.
 Than shal she been evene atte fulle alway,
 And spring-flood laste bothe night and day.
 And, but she vouche-sauf in swiche manere
 To graunte me my sovereyn lady dere,
 Prey hir to sinken every rok adoun
 In-to hir owene derke regioun
 Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne,
 Or never-mo shal I my lady winne.
 Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke;
 Lord Phebus, see the teres on my cheke,
 And of my peyne have som compassioun.'
 And with that word in swowne he fil adoun,
 And longe tyme he lay forth in a traunce.
 His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,
 Up caughte him and to bedde he hath him broght.
 Dispeyred in this torment and this thoght

Lete I this woful creature lye;
Chese he, for me, whether he wol live or dye.
Arveragus, with hele and greet honour,
As he that was of chivalrye the flour,
Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.
O blisful artow now, thou Dorigen,
That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne armes,
The fresshe knight, the worthy man of armes,
That loveth thee, as his owene hertes lyf.
No-thing list him to been imaginatyf
If any wight had spoke, whyl he was oute,
To hire of love; he hadde of it no doute.
He noght entendeth to no swich matere,
But daunceth, lusteth, maketh hir good chere;
And thus in Ioye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,
And of the syke Aurelius wol I telle.
In langour and in torment furious
Two yeer and more lay wrecche Aurelius,
Er any foot he mighte on erthe goon;
Ne confort in this tyme hadde he noon,
Save of his brother, which that was a clerk;
He knew of al this wo and al this werk.
For to non other creature certeyn
Of this matere he dorste no word seyn.
Under his brest he bar it more secree
Than ever dide Pamphilus for Galathee.
His brest was hool, with-oute for to sene,
But in his herte ay was the arwe kene.
And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure
In surgerye is perilous the cure,
But men mighte touche the arwe, or come therby.
His brother weep and wayled prively,
Til atte laste him fil in remembraunce,
That whyl he was at Orliens in Fraunce,
As yonge clerkes, that been likerous
To reden artes that been curious,
Seken in every halke and every herne
Particuler sciences for to lerne,
He him remembred that, upon a day,
At Orliens in studie a book he say
Of magik natural, which his felawe,
That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe,
Al were he ther to lerne another craft,
Had prively upon his desk y-laft;
Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns,
Touchinge the eighte and twenty mansiouns
That longen to the mone, and swich folye,
As in our dayes is nat worth a flye;
For holy chirches feith in our bileve
Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve.
And whan this book was in his remembraunce,
Anon for Ioye his herte gan to daunce,
And to him-self he seyde prively:
'My brother shal be warissshed hastily;
For I am siker that ther be sciences,

By whiche men make diverse apparences
 Swiche as thise subtile tregetoures pleye.
 For ofte at festes have I wel herd seye,
 That tregetours, with-inne an halle large,
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,
 And in the halle rowen up and down.
 Somtyme hath semed come a grim leoun;
 And somtyme floures springe as in a mede;
 Somtyme a vyne, and grapes whyte and rede;
 Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon;
 And whan hem lyked, voyded it anoon.
 Thus semed it to every mannes sighte.
 Now than conclude I thus, that if I mighte
 At Orliens som old felawe y-finde,
 That hadde this mones mansions in minde,
 Or other magik naturel above,
 He sholde wel make my brother han his love.
 For with an apparence a clerk may make
 To mannes sighte, that alle the rokkes blake
 Of Britaigne weren y-voyded everichon,
 And shippes by the brinke comen and gon,
 And in swich forme endure a day or two;
 Than were my brother warissshed of his wo.
 Than moste she nedes holden hir biheste,
 Or elles he shal shame hir atte leste.
 What sholde I make a lenger tale of this?
 Un-to his brotheres bed he comen is,
 And swich confort he yaf him for to gon
 To Orliens, that he up stirte anon,
 And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare,
 In hope for to ben lissed of his care.
 Whan they were come almost to that citee,
 But-if it were a two furlong or three,
 A yong clerk rominge by him-self they mette,
 Which that in Latin thriftily hem grette,
 And after that he seyde a wonder thing:
 'I knowe,' quod he, 'the cause of your coming';
 And er they ferther any fote wente,
 He tolde hem al that was in hir entente.
 This Briton clerk him asked of felawes
 The whiche that he had knowe in olde dawes;
 And he answerde him that they dede were,
 For which he weep ful ofte many a tere.
 Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,
 And forth with this magicien is he gon
 Hoom to his hous, and made hem wel at ese.
 Hem lakked no vitaille that mighte hem plese;
 So wel arrayed hous as ther was oon
 Aurelius in his lyf saugh never noon.
 He shewed him, er he wente to sopeer,
 Forestes, parkes ful of wilde deer;
 Ther saugh he hertes with hir homes hye,
 The gretteste that ever were seyn with yë.
 He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,
 And somme with arwes blede of bittre woundes.

He saugh, whan voided were thise wilde deer,
Thise fauconers upon a fair river,
That with hir haukes han the heron slayn.
Tho saugh he knightes lusting in a playn;
And after this, he dide him swich plesaunce,
That he him shewed his lady on a daunce
On which him-self he daunced, as him thoughte.
And whan this maister, that this magik wroughte,
Saught it was tyme, he clapte his handes two,
And farewell! al our revel was ago.
And yet remoeved they never out of the hous,
Whyl they saugh al this sighte merveillous,
But in his studie, ther-as his bookes be,
They seten stille, and no wight but they three.
To him this maister called his squyer,
And seyde him thus: 'is redy our soper?
Almost an houre it is, I undertake,
Sith I yow bad our soper for to make,
Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me
In-to my studie, ther-as my bookes be.'
'Sire,' quod this squyer, 'whan it lyketh yow,
It is al redy, though ye wol right now.'
'Go we than soupe,' quod he, 'as for the beste;
This amorous folk som-tyme mote han reste.'
At-after soper fille they in tretee,
What somme sholde this maistres guerdon be,
To remoeven alle the rokkes of Britayne,
And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.
He made it straunge, and swoor, so god him save,
Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,
Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon.
Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,
Answerde thus, 'fy on a thousand pound!
This wyde world, which that men seye is round,
I wolde it yeve, if I were lord of it.
This bargayn is ful drive, for we ben knit.
Ye shal be payed trewely, by my trouthe!
But loketh now, for no negligence or slouthe,
Ye tarie us heer no lenger than to-morwe.'
'Nay,' quod this clerk, 'have heer my feith to borwe.'
To bedde is goon Aurelius whan him leste,
And wel ny al that night he hadde his reste;
What for his labour and his hope of blisse,
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.
Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,
To Britaigne toke they the righte way,
Aurelius, and this magicien bisyde,
And been descended ther they wolde abyde;
And this was, as the bokes me remembre,
The colde frosty seson of Decembre.
Phebus wex old, and hewed lyk latoun,
That in his hote declinacioun
Shoon as the burned gold with stremes brighte;
But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,
Wher-as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.

The bittre frostes, with the sleet and reyn,
 Destroyed hath the grene in every yerd.
 Ianus sit by the fyr, with double berd,
 And drinketh of his bugle-horn the wyn.
 Biforn him stant braun of the tusked swyn,
 And "Nowel" cryeth every lusty man.
 Aurelius, in al that ever he can,
 Doth to his maister chere and reverence,
 And preyeth him to doon his diligence
 To bringen him out of his peynes smerte,
 Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte.
 This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man,
 That night and day he spedde him that he can,
 To wayte a tyme of his conclusioun;
 This is to seye, to make illusioun,
 By swich an apparence or logelrye,
 I ne can no termes of astrologye,
 That she and every wight sholde wene and seye,
 That of Britaigne the rokkes were aweye,
 Or elles they were sonken under grounde.
 So atte laste he hath his tyme y-founde
 To maken his lapes and his wrecchednesse
 Of swich a superstitious cursednesse.
 His tables Toletanes forth he broght,
 Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakked noght,
 Neither his collect ne his expans yeres,
 Ne his rotes ne his othere geres,
 As been his centres and his arguments,
 And his proporcionels convenients
 For his equacions in every thing.
 And, by his eighte spere in his wirking,
 He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove
 Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above
 That in the ninthe speere considered is;
 Ful subtilly he calculed al this.
 Whan he had founde his firste mansioun,
 He knew the remenant by proporcoun;
 And knew the arysing of his mone weel,
 And in whos face, and terme, and every-deel;
 And knew ful weel the mones mansioun
 Acordaunt to his operacioun,
 And knew also his othere observaunces
 For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces
 As hethen folk used in thilke dayes;
 For which no lenger maked he delayes,
 But thurgh his magik, for a wyke or tweye,
 It semed that alle the rokkes were aweye.
 Aurelius, which that yet despeired is
 Wher he shal han his love or fare amis,
 Awaiteth night and day on this miracle;
 And whan he knew that ther was noon obstacle,
 That voided were thise rokkes everichon,
 Doun to his maistres feet he fil anon,
 And seyde, 'I woful wrecche, Aurelius,
 Thanke yow, lord, and lady myn Venus,

That me han holpen fro my cares colde:'
And to the temple his wey forth hath he holde,
Wher-as he knew he sholde his lady see.
And whan he saugh his tyme, anon-right he,
With dredful herte and with ful humble chere,
Salewed hath his sovereyn lady dere:
'My righte lady,' quod this woful man,
'Whom I most drede and love as I best can,
And lothest were of al this world displese,
Nere it that I for yow have swich disese,
That I moste dyen heer at your foot anon,
Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon;
But certes outhere moste I dye or pleyne;
Ye slee me giltelees for verray peyne.
But of my deeth, though that ye have no routhe,
Avyseth yow, er that ye breke your trouthe.
Repenteth yow, for thilke god above,
Er ye me sleen by-cause that I yow love.
For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight;
Nat that I chalange any thing of right
Of yow my sovereyn lady, but your grace;
But in a gardin yond, at swich a place,
Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me;
And in myn hand your trouthe plighen ye
To love me best, god woot, ye seyde so,
Al be that I unworthy be therto.
Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,
More than to save myn hertes lyf right now;
I have do so as ye comanded me;
And if ye vouche-sauf, ye may go see.
Doth as yow list, have your biheste in minde,
For quik or deed, right ther ye shul me finde;
In yow lyth al, to do me live or deye;—
But wel I woot the rokkes been aweye!'
He taketh his leve, and she astonied stood,
In al hir face nas a drope of blood;
She wende never han come in swich a trappe:
'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever this sholde happe!
For wende I never, by possibilitee,
That swich a monstre or merveille mighte be!
It is agayns the proces of nature':
And hoom she gooth a sorweful creature.
For verray fere unnethe may she go,
She wepeth, wailleth, al a day or two,
And swowneth, that it routhe was to see;
But why it was, to no wight tolde she;
For out of toune was goon Arveragus.
But to hir-self she spak, and seyde thus,
With face pale and with ful sorweful chere,
In hir compleynt, as ye shul after here:
'Allas,' quod she, 'on thee, Fortune, I pleyne,
That unwar wrapped hast me in thy cheyne;
For which, tescape, woot I no socour
Save only deeth or elles dishonour;
Oon of thise two bihoveth me to chese.

But nathelees, yet have I lever to lese
 My lyf than of my body have a shame,
 Or knowe my-selven fals, or lese my name,
 And with my deth I may be quit, y-wis.
 Hath ther nat many a noble wyf, er this,
 And many a mayde y-slayn hir-self, allas!
 Rather than with hir body doon trespas?
 Yis, certes, lo, thise stories beren witnesse;
 Whan thretty tyraunts, ful of cursednesse,
 Had slayn Phidoun in Athenes, atte feste,
 They comanded his doghtres for tareste,
 And bringen hem biforn hem in despyt
 Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delyt,
 And in hir fadres blood they made hem daunce
 Upon the pavement, god yeve hem mischaunce!
 For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede,
 Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede,
 They prively ben stirt in-to a welle,
 And dreynte hem-selven, as the bokes telle.
 They of Messene lete enquere and seke
 Of Lacedomie fifty maydens eke,
 On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye;
 But was ther noon of al that companye
 That she nas slayn, and with a good entente
 Chees rather for to dye than assente
 To been oppressed of hir maydenhede.
 Why sholde I thanne to dye been in drede?
 Lo, eek, the tiraunt Aristoclides
 That loved a mayden, heet Stimphalides,
 Whan that hir fader slayn was on a night,
 Un-to Dianes temple goth she right,
 And hente the image in hir handes two,
 Fro which image wolde she never go.
 No wight ne mighte hir handes of it arace,
 Til she was slayn right in the selve place.
 Now sith that maydens hadden swich despyt
 To been defouled with mannes foul delyt,
 Wel oghte a wyf rather hir-selven slee
 Than be defouled, as it thinketh me.
 What shal I seyn of Hasdrubales wyf,
 That at Cartage birafte hir-self hir lyf?
 For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,
 She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun
 In-to the fyr, and chees rather to dye
 Than any Romayn dide hir vileinye.
 Hath nat Lucesse y-slayn hir-self, allas!
 At Rome, whanne she oppressed was
 Of Tarquin, for hir thoughte it was a shame
 To liven whan she hadde lost hir name?
 The sevene maydens of Milesie also
 Han slayn hem-self, for verray drede and wo,
 Rather than folk of Gaule hem sholde oppresse.
 Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,
 Coude I now telle as touchinge this matere.
 Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so dere

Hirselves slow, and leet hir blood to glyde
 In Habradates woundes depe and wyde,
 And seyde, "my body, at the leeste way,
 Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may."
 What sholde I mo ensamples heer-of sayn,
 Sith that so manye han hem-selven slayn
 Wel rather than they wolde defouled be?
 I wol conclude, that it is bet for me
 To sleen my-self, than been defouled thus.
 I wol be trewe un-to Arveragus,
 Or rather sleen my-self in som manere,
 As dide Demociones doghter dere,
 By-cause that she wolde nat defouled be.
 O Cedasus! it is ful greet pitee,
 To reden how thy doghtren deyde, alas!
 That slowe hem-selven for swich maner cas.
 As greet a pitee was it, or wel more,
 The Theban mayden, that for Nichanore
 Hir-selven slow, right for swich maner wo.
 Another Theban mayden dide right so;
 For oon of Macedoine hadde hir oppressed,
 She with hir deeth hir maydenhede redressed.
 What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,
 That for swich cas birafte hir-self hir lyf?
 How trewe eek was to Alcebiades
 His love, that rather for to dyen chees
 Than for to suffre his body unburied be!
 Lo which a wyf was Alceste,' quod she.
 'What seith Omer of gode Penalopee?
 Al Grece knoweth of hir chastitee.
 Pardee, of Laodomya is writen thus,
 That whan at Troye was slayn Protheselaus,
 No lenger wolde she live after his day.
 The same of noble Porcia telle I may;
 With-oute Brutus coude she nat live,
 To whom she hadde al hool hir herte yive.
 The parfit wyfhod of Arthemesye
 Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarye,
 O Teuta, queen! thy wyfly chastitee
 To alle wyves may a mirour be.
 The same thing I seye of Bilia,
 Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria.'
 Thus pleyned Dorigene a day or tweye,
 Purposinge ever that she wolde deye.
 But nathelees, upon the thridde night,
 Hom cam Arveragus, this worthy knight,
 And asked hir, why that she weep so sore?
 And she gan wepen ever lenger the more.
 'Allas!' quod she, 'that ever was I born!
 Thus have I seyde,' quod she, 'thus have I sworn'—
 And told him al as ye han herd bfore;
 It nedeth nat reherce it yow na-more.
 This housbond with glad chere, in frendly wyse,
 Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse:
 'Is ther oght elles, Dorigen, but this?'

'Nay, nay,' quod she, 'god help me so, as wis;
 This is to muche, and it were goddes wille.'
 'Ye, wyf,' quod he, 'lat slepen that is stille;
 It may be wel, paraventure, yet to-day.
 Ye shul your trouthe holden, by my fay!
 For god so wisly have mercy on me,
 I hadde wel lever y-stiked for to be,
 For verray love which that I to yow have,
 But-if ye sholde your trouthe kepe and save.
 Trouthe is the hyeste thing that man may kepe':—
 But with that word he brast anon to wepe,
 And seyde, 'I yow forbede, up peyne of deeth,
 That never, whyl thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,
 To no wight tel thou of this aventure.
 As I may best, I wol my wo endure,
 Ne make no contenance of hevinesse,
 That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse.'
 And forth he cleped a squyer and a mayde:
 'Goth forth anon with Dorigen,' he sayde,
 'And bringeth hir to swich a place anon.'
 They take hir leve, and on hir wey they gon;
 But they ne wiste why she thider wente.
 He nolde no wight tellen his entente.
 Paraventure an heap of yow, y-wis,
 Wol holden him a lewed man in this,
 That he wol putte his wyf in Iupartye;
 Herkneth the tale, er ye up-on hir crye.
 She may have bettre fortune than yow semeth;
 And whan that ye han herd the tale, demeth.
 This squyer, which that highte Aurelius,
 On Dorigen that was so amorous,
 Of aventure happed hir to mete
 Amidde the toun, right in the quikkeste strete,
 As she was boun to goon the wey forth-right
 Toward the gardin ther-as she had hight.
 And he was to the gardinward also;
 For wel he spyed, whan she wolde go
 Out of hir hous to any maner place.
 But thus they mette, of aventure or grace;
 And he saleweth hir with glad entente,
 And asked of hir whiderward she wente?
 And she answerde, half as she were mad,
 'Un-to the gardin, as myn housbond bad,
 My trouthe for to holde, allas! allas!'
 Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,
 And in his herte had greet compassioun
 Of hir and of hir lamentacioun,
 And of Arveragus, the worthy knight,
 That bad hir holden al that she had hight,
 So looth him was his wyf sholde breke hir trouthe;
 And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,
 Consideringe the beste on every syde,
 That fro his lust yet were him lever abyde
 Than doon so heigh a cherlish wrecchednesse
 Agayns franchyse and alle gentillesse;

For which in fewe wordes seyde he thus:
'Madame, seyth to your lord Arveragus,
That sith I see his grete gentillesse
To yow, and eek I see wel your distresse,
That him were lever han shame (and that were routhe)
Than ye to me sholde breke thus your trouthe,
I have wel lever ever to suffre wo
Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.
I yow relese, madame, in-to your hond
Quit every surement and every bond,
That ye han maad to me as heer-biforn,
Sith thilke tyme which that ye were born.
My trouthe I plighte, I shal yow never repreve
Of no biheste, and here I take my leve,
As of the treweste and the beste wyf
That ever yet I knew in al my lyf.
But every wyf be-war of hir biheste,
On Dorigene remembreth atte leste.
Thus can a squyer doon a gentil dede,
As well as can a knight, with-outen drede.'
She thonketh him up-on hir knees al bare,
And hoom un-to hir housbond is she fare,
And tolde him al as ye han herd me sayd;
And be ye siker, he was so weel apayd,
That it were impossible me to wryte;
What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte?
Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf
In sovereyn blisse leden forth hir lyf.
Never eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene;
He cherisseth hir as though she were a quene;
And she was to him trewe for evermore.
Of thise two folk ye gete of me na-more.
Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,
Curseth the tyme that ever he was born:
'Allas,' quod he, 'allas! that I bihighte
Of pured gold a thousand pound of wighte
Un-to this philosophre! how shal I do?
I see na-more but that I am fordo.
Myn heritage moot I nedes selle,
And been a begger; heer may I nat dwelle,
And shamen al my kinrede in this place,
But I of him may gete bettre grace.
But nathelees, I wol of him assaye,
At certeyn dayes, yeer by yeer, to paye,
And thanke him of his grete curteisye;
My trouthe wol I kepe, I wol nat lye.'
With herte soor he gooth un-to his cofre,
And broghte gold un-to this philosophre,
The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse,
And him bisecheth, of his gentillesse,
To graunte him dayes of the remenaunt,
And seyde, 'maister, I dar wel make avaunt,
I failed never of my trouthe as yit;
For sikerly my dette shal be quit
Towardes yow, how-ever that I fare

To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare.
 But wolde ye vouche-sauf, up-on seurtee,
 Two yeer or three for to respyten me,
 Than were I wel; for elles moot I selle
 Myn heritage; ther is na-more to telle.
 This philosophre sobrelly answerde,
 And seyde thus, whan he thise wordes herde:
 'Have I nat holden covenant un-to thee?'
 'Yes, certes, wel and trewely,' quod he.
 'Hastow nat had thy lady as thee lyketh?'
 'No, no,' quod he, and sorwefully he syketh.
 'What was the cause? tel me if thou can.'
 Aurelius his tale anon bigan,
 And tolde him al, as ye han herd bifore;
 It nedeth nat to yow reherce it more.
 He seide, 'Arveragus, of gentillesse,
 Had lever dye in sorwe and in distresse
 Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals.'
 The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde him als,
 How looth hir was to been a wikked wyf,
 And that she lever had lost that day hir lyf,
 And that hir trouthe she swoor, thurgh innocence:
 'She never erst herde speke of apparence;
 That made me han of hir so greet pitee.
 And right as frely as he sente hir me,
 As frely sente I hir to him ageyn.
 This al and som, ther is na-more to seyn.'
 This philosophre answerde, 'leve brother,
 Everich of yow dide gentilly til other.
 Thou art a squyer, and he is a knight;
 But god forbede, for his blisful might,
 But-if a clerk coude doon a gentil dede
 As wel as any of yow, it is no drede!
 Sire, I relesse thee thy thousand pound,
 As thou right now were copen out of the ground,
 Ne never er now ne haddest knowen me.
 For sire, I wol nat take a peny of thee
 For al my craft, ne noght for my travaille.
 Thou hast y-paid wel for my vitaille;
 It is y-nogh, and farewel, have good day.'
 And took his hors, and forth he gooth his way.
 Lordinges, this question wolde I aske now,
 Which was the moste free, as thinketh yow?
 Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.
 I can na-more, my tale is at an ende.
Here is ended the Frankeleyns Tale.

THE SECONDE NONNES TALE.

The Prologe of the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

The ministre and the norice un-to vyces,
 Which that men clepe in English ydelnesse,
 That porter of the gate is of delyces,
 To eschue, and by hir contrarie hir oppresse,
 That is to seyn, by leveful businesse,

Wel oghten we to doon al our entente,
 Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us hente.
 For he, that with his thousand cordes slye
 Continuelly us waiteth to biclappe,
 Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye,
 He can so lightly cacche him in his trappe,
 Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,
 He nis nat war the feend hath him in honde;
 Wel oughte us werche, and ydelnes withstonde.
 And though men dradden never for to dye,
 Yet seen men wel by reson doutelees,
 That ydelnesse is roten slogardy, e,
 Of which ther never comth no good encrees;
 And seen, that slouthe hir holdeth in a lees
 Only to slepe, and for to ete and drinke,
 And to devouren al that othere swinke.
 And for to putte us fro swich ydelnesse,
 That cause is of so greet confusioun,
 I have heer doon my feithful bisnesse,
 After the legende, in translacioun
 Right of thy glorious lyf and passioun,
 Thou with thy gerland wroght of rose and lilie;
 Thee mene I, mayde and martir, seint Cecilie!

Inuocacio ad Mariam.

And thou that flour of virgines art alle,
 Of whom that Bernard list so wel to wryte,
 To thee at my biginning first I calle;
 Thou comfort of us wrecches, do me endyte
 Thy maydens deeth, that wan thurgh hir meryte
 The eternal lyf, and of the feend victorie,
 As man may after reden in hir storie.
 Thou mayde and mooder, doghter of thy sone,
 Thou welle of mercy, sinful soules cure,
 In whom that god, for bountee, chees to wone,
 Thou humble, and heigh over every creature,
 Thou nobledest so ferforth our nature,
 That no desdeyn the maker hadde of kinde,
 His sone in blode and flesh to clothe and winde.
 Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydes
 Took mannes shap the eternal love and pees,
 That of the tryne compas lord and gyde is,
 Whom erthe and see and heven, out of relees,
 Ay herien; and thou, virgin wemmelees,
 Bar of thy body, and dweltest mayden pure,
 The creatour of every creature.
 Assembled is in thee magnificence
 With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee
 That thou, that art the sonne of excellence,
 Nat only helpest hem that preyen thee,
 But ofte tyme, of thy benignitee,
 Ful frely, er that men thyn help biseche,
 Thou goost biforn, and art hir lyves leche.
 Now help, thou meke and blisful fayre mayde,
 Me, flemed wrecche, in this desert of galle;
 Think on the womman Cananee, that sayde

That whelpes eten somme of the crommes alle
 That from hir lordes table been y-falle;
 And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,
 Be sinful, yet accepte my bileve.
 And, for that feith is deed with-outen werkes,
 So for to werken yif me wit and space,
 That I be quit fro thennes that most derk is!
 O thou, that art so fayr and ful of grace,
 Be myn advocat in that heighe place
 Ther-as withouten ende is songe 'Osanne,'
 Thou Cristes mooder, doghter dere of Anne!
 And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,
 That troubled is by the contagioun
 Of my body, and also by the wighte
 Of erthly luste and fals affecciou;
 O haven of refut, o salvacioun
 Of hem that been in sorwe and in distresse,
 Now help, for to my werk I wol me dresse.
 Yet preye I yow that reden that I wryte,
 Foryeve me, that I do no diligence
 This ilke storie subtilly to endyte;
 For both have I the wordes and sentence
 Of him that at the seintes reverence
 The storie wroot, and folwe hir legende,
 And prey yow, that ye wol my werk amende.
Interpretado nominis Cecilie, quam ponit frater Iacobus
Ianuensis in Legenda Aurea.
 First wolde I yow the name of seint Cecilie
 Expoune, as men may in hir storie see,
 It is to seye in English 'hevenes lilie,'
 For pure chastnesse of virginitee;
 Or, for she whytnesse hadde of honestee,
 And grene of conscience, and of good fame
 The sole savour, 'lilie' was hir name.
 Or Cecile is to seye 'the wey to blinde,'
 For she ensample was by good techinge;
 Or elles Cecile, as I writen finde,
 Is ioyned, by a maner conioininge
 Of 'hevene' and 'Lia'; and heer, in figuringe,
 The 'heven' is set for thought of holinesse,
 And 'Lia' for hir lasting bisnesse.
 Cecile may eek be seyde in this manere,
 'Wanting of blindnesse,' for hir grete light
 Of sapience, and for hir thewes clere;
 Or elles, lo! this maydens name bright
 Of 'hevene' and 'leos' comth, for which by right
 Men mighte hir wel 'the heven of peple' calle,
 Ensamples of gode and wyse werkes alle.
 For 'leos' 'peple' in English is to seye,
 And right as men may in the hevene see
 The sonne and mone and sterres every weye,
 Right so men gostly, in this mayden free,
 Seyen of feith the magnanimitee,
 And eek the cleernesse hool of sapience,
 And sondry werkes, brighte of excellence.

And right so as thise philosophres wryte
 That heven is swift and round and eek brenninge,
 Right so was fayre Cecilie the whyte
 Ful swift and bisy ever in good werkinge,
 And round and hool in good perseveringe,
 And brenning ever in charitee ful brighte;
 Now have I yow declared what she highte.

Explicit.

Here biginneth the Seconde Nonnes Tale, of the lyf of Seinte Cecile.

This mayden bright Cecilie, as hir lyf seith,
 Was comen of Romainys, and of noble kinde,
 And from hir cradel up fostred in the feith
 Of Crist, and bar his gospel in hir minde;
 She never cessed, as I writen finde,
 Of hir preyere, and god to love and drede,
 Biseking him to kepe hir maydenhede.
 And when this mayden sholde unto a man
 Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,
 Which that y-cleped was Valerian,
 And day was comen of hir mariage,
 She, ful devout and humble in hir corage,
 Under hir robe of gold, that sat ful fayre,
 Had next hir flesh y-clad hir in an heyre.
 And whyl the organs maden melodye,
 To god alone in herte thus sang she;
 'O lord, my soule and eek my body gye
 Unwemmed, lest that I confounded be.'
 And, for his love that deyde upon a tree,
 Every secunde or thridde day she faste,
 Ay biddinge in hir orisons ful faste.
 The night cam, and to bedde moste she gon
 With hir housbonde, as ofte is the manere,
 And prively to him she seyde anon,
 'O swete and wel biloved spouse dere,
 Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it here,
 Which that right fain I wolde unto yow seye,
 So that ye swere ye shul me nat biwreye.'
 Valerian gan faste unto hir swere,
 That for no cas, ne thing that mighte be,
 He sholde never-mo biwreien here;
 And thanne at erst to him thus seyde she,
 'I have an angel which that loveth me,
 That with greet love, wher-so I wake or slepe,
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe.
 And if that he may felen, out of drede,
 That ye me touche or love in vileinye,
 He right anon wol slee yow with the dede,
 And in your yowthe thus ye shulden dye;
 And if that ye in clene love me gye,
 He wol yow loven as me, for your clenness,
 And shewen yow his loye and his brightnesse.'
 Valerian, corrected as god wolde,
 Answerde agayn, 'if I shal trusten thee,
 Lat me that angel se, and him biholde;
 And if that it a verray angel be,

Than wol I doon as thou hast preyed me;
 And if thou love another man, for sothe
 Right with this swerd than wol I slee yow bothe.
 Cecile answerde anon right in this wyse,
 'If that yow list, the angel shul ye see,
 So that ye trowe on Crist and yow baptyse.
 Goth forth to Via Apia,' quod she,
 'That fro this toun ne stant but myles three,
 And, to the povre folkes that ther dwelle,
 Sey hem right thus, as that I shal yow telle.
 Telle hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem sente,
 To shewen yow the gode Urban the olde,
 For secree nedes and for good entente.
 And whan that ye seint Urban han biholde,
 Telle him the wordes whiche I to yow tolde;
 And whan that he hath purged yow fro sinne,
 Thanne shul ye see that angel, er ye twinne.'
 Valerian is to the place y-gon,
 And right as him was taught by his lerninge,
 He fond this holy olde Urban anon
 Among the seintes buriels lotinge.
 And he anon, with-uten taryinge,
 Dide his message; and whan that he it tolde,
 Urban for Ioye his hondes gan up holde.
 The teres from his yën leet he falle—
 'Almighty lord, o Iesu Crist,' quod he,
 'Sower of chast conseil, herde of us alle,
 The fruit of thilke seed of chastitee
 That thou hast sowe in Cecile, tak to thee!
 Lo, lyk a bisy bee, with-uten gyle,
 Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile!
 For thilke spouse, that she took but now
 Ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth here,
 As meke as ever was any lamb, to yow!'
 And with that worde, anon ther gan appere
 An old man, clad in whyte clothes clere,
 That hadde a book with lettre of golde in honde,
 And gan biforn Valerian to stonde.
 Valerian as deed fil doun for drede
 Whan he him saugh, and he up hente him tho,
 And on his book right thus he gan to rede—
 'Oo Lord, oo feith, oo god with-uten mo,
 Oo Cristendom, and fader of alle also,
 Aboven alle and over al everywhere'—
 Thise wordes al with gold y-writen were.
 Whan this was rad, than seyde this olde man,
 'Levestow this thing or no? sey ye or nay.'
 'I leve al this thing,' quod Valerian,
 'For sother thing than this, I dar wel say,
 Under the hevene no wight thinke may.'
 Tho vanissed the olde man, he niste where,
 And pope Urban him cristened right there.
 Valerian goth hoom, and fint Cecilie
 With-inne his chambre with an angel stonde;
 This angel hadde of roses and of lilie

Corones two, the which he bar in honde;
And first to Cecile, as I understonde,
He yaf that oon, and after gan he take
That other to Valerian, hir make.
'With body clene and with unwemmed thought
Kepeth ay wel thise corones,' quod he;
'Fro Paradys to yow have I hem broght,
Ne never-mo ne shal they roten be,
Ne lese her sote savour, trusteth me;
Ne never wight shal seen hem with his yë,
But he be chaast and hate vileinyë.
And thou, Valerian, for thou so sone
Assentedest to good conseil also,
Sey what thee list, and thou shalt han thy bone.'
'I have a brother,' quod Valerian tho,
'That in this world I love no man so.
I pray yow that my brother may han grace
To knowe the trouthe, as I do in this place.'
The angel seyde, 'god lyketh thy requeste,
And bothe, with the palm of martirdom,
Ye shullen come unto his blisful feste.'
And with that word Tiburce his brother com.
And whan that he the savour undernom
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,
With-inne his herte he gan to wondre faste,
And seyde, 'I wondre, this tyme of the yeer,
Whennes that sote savour cometh so
Of rose and lilies that I smelle heer.
For though I hadde hem in myn hondes two,
The savour mighte in me no depper go.
The sote smel that in myn herte I finde
Hath chaunged me al in another kinde.'
Valerian seyde, 'two corones han we,
Snow-whyte and rose-reed, that shynen clere,
Whiche that thyn yën han no might to see;
And as thou smellest hem thurgh my preyere,
So shaltow seen hem, leve brother dere,
If it so be thou wolt, withouten slouthe,
Bileve aright and knowen verray trouthe.'
Tiburce answerde, 'seistow this to me
In soothnesse, or in dreem I herkne this?'
'In dremes,' quod Valerian, 'han we be
Unto this tyme, brother myn, y-wis.
But now at erst in trouthe our dwelling is.'
'How woostow this,' quod Tiburce, 'in what wyse?'
Quod Valerian, 'that shal I thee devyse.
The angel of god hath me the trouthe y-taught
Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt reneye
The ydoles and be clene, and elles naught.'—
And of the miracle of thise corones tweye
Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye;
Solempnely this noble doctour dere
Commendeth it, and seith in this manere:
The palm of martirdom for to receyve,
Seinte Cecile, fulfild of goddes yifte,

The world and eek hir chambre gan she weyve;
 Witnes Tyburces and Valerians shrifte,
 To whiche god of his bountee wolde shifte
 Corones two of floures wel smellinge,
 And made his angel hem the corones bringe:
 The mayde hath broght thise men to blisse above;
 The world hath wist what it is worth, certeyn,
 Devocioun of chastitee to love.—
 Tho shewede him Cecile al open and pleyn
 That alle ydoles nis but a thing in veyn;
 For they been dombe, and therto they been deve,
 And charged him his ydoles for to leve.
 'Who so that troweth nat this, a beste he is,'
 Quod tho Tiburce, 'if that I shal nat lye.'
 And she gan kisse his brest, that herde this,
 And was ful glad he coude trouthe espye.
 'This day I take thee for myn allye,'
 Seyde this blisful fayre mayde dere;
 And after that she seyde as ye may here:
 'Lo, right so as the love of Crist,' quod she,
 'Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in that wyse
 Anon for myn allye heer take I thee,
 Sin that thou wolt thyn ydoles despyse.
 Go with thy brother now, and thee baptyse,
 And make thee clene; so that thou mowe biholde
 The angels face of which thy brother tolde.'
 Tiburce answerde and seyde, 'brother dere,
 First tel me whider I shal, and to what man?'
 'To whom?' quod he, 'com forth with right good chere,
 I wol thee lede unto the pope Urban.'
 'Til Urban? brother myn Valerian,'
 Quod tho Tiburce, 'voltow me thider lede?
 Me thinketh that it were a wonder dede.
 Ne menestow nat Urban,' quod he tho,
 'That is so ofte dampned to be deed,
 And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,
 And dar nat ones putte forth his heed?
 Men sholde him brennen in a fyr so reed
 If he were founde, or that men mighte him spyre;
 And we also, to bere him companye—
 And whyl we seken thilke divinitee
 That is y-hid in hevene prively,
 Algate y-brend in this world shul we be!'
 To whom Cecile answerde boldely,
 'Men mighten dreden wel and skilfully
 This lyf to lese, myn owene dere brother,
 If this were livinge only and non other.
 But ther is better lyf in other place,
 That never shal be lost, ne drede thee noght,
 Which goddes sone us tolde thurgh his grace;
 That fadres sone hath alle thinges wroght;
 And al that wroght is with a skilful thoght,
 The goost, that fro the fader gan precede,
 Hath sowled hem, withouten any drede.
 By word and by miracle goddes sone,

Whan he was in this world, declared here
That ther was other lyf ther men may wone.
To whom answerde Tiburce, 'o suster dere,
Ne seydestow right now in this manere,
Ther nis but o god, lord in soothfastnesse;
And now of three how maystow bere witness?'
'That shal I telle,' quod she, 'er I go.
Right as a man hath sapiences three,
Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,
So, in o being of divinitee,
Three persones may ther right wel be.'
Tho gan she him ful bisily to preche
Of Cristes come and of his peynes teche,
And many pointes of his passioun;
How goddes sone in this world was withholde,
To doon mankinde pleyn remissioun,
That was y-bounde in sinne and cares colde:
Al this thing she unto Tiburce tolde.
And after this Tiburce, in good entente,
With Valerian to pope Urban he wente,
That thanked god; and with glad herte and light
He cristned him, and made him in that place
Parfit in his lerninge, goddes knight.
And after this Tiburce gat swich grace,
That every day he saugh, in tyme and space,
The angel of god; and every maner bone
That he god axed, it was sped ful sone.
It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn
How many wondres Iesus for hem wroghte;
But atte laste, to tellen short and pleyn,
The sergeants of the toun of Rome hem soghte,
And hem biforn Almache the prefect broghte,
Which hem apposed, and knew al hir entente,
And to the image of Iupiter hem sente,
And seyde, 'who so wol nat sacrificyse,
Swap of his heed, this is my sentence here.'
Anon thise martirs that I yow devyse,
Oon Maximus, that was an officere
Of the prefectes and his corniculere,
Hem hente; and whan he forth the seintes ladde,
Him-self he weep, for pitee that he hadde.
Whan Maximus had herd the seintes lore,
He gat him of the tormentoures leve,
And ladde hem to his hous withoute more;
And with hir preching, er that it were eve,
They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone
The false feith, to trowe in god allone.
Cecilie cam, whan it was woxen night,
With preestes that hem cristned alle y-fere;
And afterward, whan day was woxen light,
Cecile hem seyde with a ful sobre chere,
'Now, Cristes owene knightes leve and dere,
Caste alle away the werkes of derknesse,
And armeth yow in armure of brightnesse.

Ye han for sothe y-doon a greet bataille,
 Your cours is doon, your feith han ye conserved,
 Goth to the corone of lyf that may nat faille;
 The rightful Iuge, which that ye han served,
 Shall yeve it yow, as ye han it deserved.
 And whan this thing was seyde as I devyse,
 Men ladde hem forth to doon the sacrifyse.
 But whan they weren to the place broght,
 To tellen shortly the conclusioun,
 They nolde encense ne sacrifice right noght,
 But on hir knees they setten hem adoun
 With humble herte and sad devocioun,
 And losten bothe hir hedes in the place.
 Hir soules wenten to the king of grace.
 This Maximus, that saugh this thing bityde,
 With pitous teres tolde it anon-right,
 That he hir soules saugh to heven glyde
 With angels ful of cleernesse and of light,
 And with his word converted many a wight;
 For which Almachius dide him so to-bete
 With whippe of leed, til he his lyf gan lete.
 Cecile him took and buried him anoon
 By Tiburce and Valerian softly,
 Withinne hir burying-place, under the stoon.
 And after this Almachius hastily
 Bad his ministres fecchen openly
 Cecile, so that she mighte in his presence
 Doon sacrifyce, and Iupiter encense.
 But they, converted at hir wyse lore,
 Wepten ful sore, and yaven ful credence
 Unto hir word, and cryden more and more,
 'Crist, goddes sone withouten difference,
 Is verray god, this is al our sentence,
 That hath so good a servant him to serve;
 This with o voys we trowen, thogh we sterve!'
 Almachius, that herde of this doinge,
 Bad fecchen Cecile, that he might hir see,
 And alderfirst, lo! this was his axinge,
 'What maner womman artow?' tho quod he.
 'I am a gentil womman born,' quod she.
 'I axe thee,' quod he, 'thogh it thee greve,
 Of thy religioun and of thy bileve.'
 'Ye han bigonne your question folily,'
 Quod she, 'that wolden two answeres conclude
 In oo demande; ye axed lewedly.'
 Almache answerde unto that similitude,
 'Of whennes comth thyn answering so rude?'
 'Of whennes?' quod she, whan that she was freyned,
 'Of conscience and of good feith unfeyned.'
 Almachius seyde, 'ne takestow non hede
 Of my power?' and she answerde him this—
 'Your might,' quod she, 'ful litel is to drede;
 For every mortal mannes power nis
 But lyk a bladdre, ful of wind, y-wis.
 For with a nedles poynt, whan it is blowe,

May al the boost of it be leyd ful lowe.
'Ful wrongfully bigonne thou,' quod he,
'And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce;
Wostow nat how our mighty princes free
Han thus comanded and maad ordinaunce,
That every cristen wight shal han penaunce
But-if that he his cristendom withseye,
And goon al quit, if he wol it reneye?'
'Your princes erren, as your nobley dooth,'
Quod tho Cecile, 'and with a wood sentence
Ye make us gilty, and it is nat sooth;
For ye, that knowen wel our innocence,
For as muche as we doon a reverence
To Crist, and for we bere a cristen name,
Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame.
But we that knowen thilke name so
For vertuous, we may it nat withseye.'
Almache answerde, 'chees oon of thise two,
Do sacrifice, or cristendom reneye,
That thou mowe now escapen by that weye.'
At which the holy blisful fayre mayde
Gan for to laughe, and to the Iuge seyde,
'O Iuge, confus in thy nycetee,
Woltow that I reneye innocence,
To make me a wikked wight?' quod she;
'Lo! he dissimuleth here in audience,
He stareth and woodeth in his advertence!
To whom Almachius, 'unsely wrecche,
Ne woostow nat how far my might may strecche?
Han noght our mighty princes to me yeven,
Ye, bothe power and auctoritee
To maken folk to dyen or to liven?
Why spekestow so proudly than to me?'
'I speke noght but stedfastly,' quod she,
'Nat proudly, for I seye, as for my syde,
We haten deedly thilke vyce of pryde.
And if thou drede nat a sooth to here,
Than wol I shewe al openly, by right,
That thou hast maad a ful gret lesing here.
Thou seyst, thy princes han thee yeven might
Bothe for to sleen and for to quiken a wight;
Thou, that ne mayst but only lyf bireve,
Thou hast non other power ne no leve!
But thou mayst seyn, thy princes han thee maked
Ministre of deeth; for if thou speke of mo,
Thou lyest, for thy power is ful naked.'
'Do wey thy boldnes,' seyde Almachius tho,
'And sacrifice to our goddes, er thou go;
I recche nat what wrong that thou me profre,
For I can suffre it as a philosophre;
But thilke wronges may I nat endure
That thou spekest of our goddes here,' quod he.
Cecile answerede, 'o nyce creature,
Thou seydest no word sin thou spak to me
That I ne knew therwith thy nycetee;

And that thou were, in every maner wyse,
 A lewed officer and a veyn lustyse.
 Ther lakketh no-thing to thyn utter yën
 That thou nart blind, for thing that we seen alle
 That it is stoon, that men may wel espyen,
 That ilke stoon a god thou wolt it calle.
 I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,
 And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it finde,
 Sin that thou seest nat with thyn yën blinde.
 It is a shame that the peple shal
 So scorne thee, and laughe at thy folye;
 For comunly men woot it wel overal,
 That mighty god is in his hevenes hye,
 And thise images, wel thou mayst espye,
 To thee ne to hem-self mowe nought profyte,
 For in effect they been nat worth a myte.
 Thise wordes and swiche othere seyde she,
 And he weex wroth, and bad men sholde hir lede
 Hom til hir hous, 'and in hir hous,' quod he,
 'Brenne hir right in a bath of flambes rede.'
 And as he bad, right so was doon in dede;
 For in a bath they gonne hir faste shetten,
 And night and day greet fyr they under betten.
 The longe night and eek a day also,
 For al the fyr and eek the bathes hete,
 She sat al cold, and felede no wo,
 It made hir nat a drope for to swete.
 But in that bath hir lyf she moste lete;
 For he, Almachius, with ful wikke entente
 To sleen hir in the bath his sonde sente.
 Three strokes in the nekke he smoot hir tho,
 The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce
 He mighte noght smyte al hir nekke a-two;
 And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce,
 That no man sholde doon man swich penaunce
 The ferthe strook to smyten, softe or sore,
 This tormentour ne dorste do na-more.
 But half-deed, with hir nekke y-corven there,
 He lefte hir lye, and on his wey is went.
 The cristen folk, which that aboute hir were,
 With shetes han the blood ful faire y-hent.
 Thre dayes lived she in this torment,
 And never cessed hem the feith to teche;
 That she hadde fostred, hem she gan to preche;
 And hem she yaf hir moebles and hir thing,
 And to the pope Urban bitook hem tho,
 And seyde, 'I axed this at hevene king,
 To han respyt three dayes and na-mo,
 To recomende to yow, er that I go,
 Thise soules, lo! and that I mighte do werche
 Here of myn hous perpetuelly a cherche.'
 Seint Urban, with his deknes, prively
 The body fette, and buried it by nighte
 Among his othere seintes honestly.
 Hir hous the chirche of seint Cecilie highte;

Seint Urban halwed it, as he wel mighte;
 In which, into this day, in noble wyse,
 Men doon to Crist and to his seint servyse.
Here is ended the Seconde Nonnes Tale.

THE CANON'S YEOMAN'S PROLOGUE

The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes Tale.

Whan ended was the lyf of seint Cecyle,
 Er we had riden fully fyve myle,
 At Boghton under Blee us gan atake
 A man, that clothed was in clothes blake,
 And undernethe he hadde a whyt surpys.
 His hakeney, that was al pomely grys,
 So swatte, that it wonder was to see;
 It semed he had priked myles three.
 The hors eek that his yeman rood upon
 So swatte, that unnethe mighte it gon.
 Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful hye,
 He was of fome al flekked as a pye.
 A male tweyfold on his croper lay,
 It semed that he caried lyte array.
 Al light for somer rood this worthy man,
 And in myn herte wondren I bigan
 What that he was, til that I understood
 How that his cloke was sowed to his hood;
 For which, when I had longe avysed me,
 I demed him som chanon for to be.
 His hat heng at his bak down by a laas,
 For he had riden more than trot or paas;
 He had ay priked lyk as he were wood.
 A clote-leef he hadde under his hood
 For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from hete.
 But it was Ioye for to seen him swete!
 His forheed dropped as a stillatorie,
 Were ful of plantain and of paritorie.
 And whan that he was come, he gan to crye,
 'God save,' quod he, 'this Ioly companye!
 Faste have I priked,' quod he, 'for your sake,
 By-cause that I wolde yow atake,
 To ryden in this mery companye.'
 His yeman eek was ful of curteisye,
 And seyde, 'sires, now in the morwe-tyde
 Out of your hostelrye I saugh you ryde,
 And warned heer my lord and my soverayn,
 Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn,
 For his desport; he loveth daliaunce.'
 'Freend, for thy warning god yeve thee good chaunce,'
 Than seyde our host, 'for certes, it wolde seme
 Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme;
 He is ful Iocund also, dar I leye.
 Can he oght telle a mery tale or tweye,
 With which he glade may this companye?'
 'Who, sire? my lord? ye, ye, withouten lye,
 He can of murthe, and eek of Iolitee

Nat but ynough; also sir, trusteth me,
 And ye him knewe as wel as do I,
 Ye wolde wondre how wel and craftily
 He coude werke, and that in sondry wyse.
 He hath take on him many a greet emprise,
 Which were ful hard for any that is here
 To bringe aboute, but they of him it lere.
 As homely as he rit amonges yow,
 If ye him knewe, it wolde be for your prow;
 Ye wolde nat forgoon his aqueyntaunce
 For mochel good, I dar leye in balaunce
 Al that I have in my possessioun.
 He is a man of heigh discrecioun,
 I warne you wel, he is a passing man.'
 "Wel,' quod our host, 'I pray thee, tel me than,
 Is he a clerk, or noon? tel what he is.'
 'Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, y-wis,'
 Seyde this yeman, 'and in wordes fewe,
 Host, of his craft som-what I wol yow shewe.
 I seye, my lord can swich subtilitee—
 (But al his craft ye may nat wite at me;
 And som-what helpe I yet to his werking)—
 That al this ground on which we been ryding,
 Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,
 He coude al clene turne it up-so-doun,
 And pave it al of silver and of gold.'
 And whan this yeman hadde thus y-told
 Unto our host, he seyde, '*benedicite!*
 This thing is wonder merveillous to me,
 Sin that thy lord is of so heigh prudence,
 By-cause of which men sholde him reverence,
 That of his worship rekketh he so lyte;
 His oversloppe nis nat worth a myte,
 As in effect, to him, so mote I go!
 It is al baudy and to-tore also.
 Why is thy lord so sluttish, I thee preye,
 And is of power better cloth to beye,
 If that his dede accorde with thy speche?
 Telle me that, and that I thee biseche.'
 'Why?' quod this yeman, 'wherto axe ye me?
 God help me so, for he shal never thee!
 (But I wol nat avowe that I seye,
 And therfor kepe it secree, I yow preye).
 He is to wys, in feith, as I bileve;
 That that is overdoon, it wol nat preve
 Aright, as clerkes seyn, it is a vyce.
 Wherfor in that I holde him lewed and nyce.
 For whan a man hath over-greet a wit,
 Ful oft him happeth to misusen it;
 So dooth my lord, and that me greveth sore.
 God it amende, I can sey yow na-more.'
 'Ther-of no fors, good yeman,' quod our host;
 'Sin of the conning of thy lord thou wost,
 Tel how he dooth, I pray thee hertely,
 Sin that he is so crafty and so sly.

Wher dwellen ye, if it to telle be?’
‘In the suburbs of a toun,’ quod he,
‘Lurkinge in hernes and in lanes blinde,
Wher-as thise robbours and thise theves by kinde
Holden hir privee fereful residence,
As they that dar nat shewen hir presence;
So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe.’
‘Now,’ quod our host, ‘yit lat me talke to the;
Why artow so discoloured of thy face?’
‘Peter!’ quod he, ‘god yeve it harde grace,
I am so used in the fyr to blowe,
That it hath chaunged my colour, I trowe.
I am nat wont in no mirour to pry,
But swinke sore and lerne multiplie.
We blondren ever and pouren in the fyr,
And for al that we fayle of our desyr,
For ever we lakken our conclusioun.
To mochel folk we doon illusioun,
And borwe gold, be it a pound or two,
Or ten, or twelve, or many sommes mo,
And make hem wenen, at the leeste weye,
That of a pound we coude make tweye!
Yet is it fals, but ay we han good hope
It for to doon, and after it we grope.
But that science is so fer us biforn,
We mowen nat, al-though we hadde it sworn,
It overtake, it slit away so faste;
It wol us maken beggers atte laste.’
Whyl this yeman was thus in his talking,
This chanoun drough him neer, and herde al thing
Which this yeman spak, for suspecioun
Of mennes speche ever hadde this chanoun.
For Catoun seith, that he that gilty is
Demeth al thing be spoke of him, y-wis.
That was the cause he gan so ny him drawe
To his yeman, to herknen al his sawe.
And thus he seyde un-to his yeman tho,
‘Hold thou thy pees, and spek no wordes mo,
For if thou do, thou shalt it dere aby;
Thou sclaudrest me heer in this companye,
And eek discoverest that thou sholdest hyde.’
‘Ye,’ quod our host, ‘telle on, what so bityde;
Of al his threting rekke nat a myte!’
‘In feith,’ quod he, ‘namore I do but lyte.’
And whan this chanon saugh it wolde nat be,
But his yeman wolde telle his privetee,
He fledde away for verray sorwe and shame.
‘A!’ quod the yeman, ‘heer shal aryse game,
Al that I can anon now wol I telle.
Sin he is goon, the foule feend him quelle!
For never her-after wol I with him mete
For peny ne for pound, I yow bihete!
He that me broghte first unto that game,
Er that he dye, sorwe have he and shame!
For it is ernest to me, by my feith;

That fele I wel, what so any man seith.
 And yet, for al my smert and al my grief,
 For al my sorwe, labour, and meschief,
 I coude never leve it in no wyse.
 Now wolde god my wit mighte suffyse
 To tellen al that longeth to that art!
 But natheles yow wol I tellen part;
 Sin that my lord is gon, I wol nat spare;
 Swich thing as that I knowe, I wol declare.—

Here endeth the Prologe of the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

THE CHANOUNS YEMANNES TALE.

Here biginneth the Chanouns Yeman his Tale.

[*Prima pars.*]

With this chanoun I dwelt have seven yeer,
 And of his science am I never the neer.
 Al that I hadde, I have y-lost ther-by;
 And god wot, so hath many mo than I.
 Ther I was wont to be right fresh and gay
 Of clothing and of other good array,
 Now may I were an hose upon myn heed;
 And wher my colour was bothe fresh and reed,
 Now is it wan and of a leden hewe;
 Who-so it useth, sore shal he rewe.
 And of my swink yet blered is myn yë,
 Lo! which advantage is to multiplie!
 That slyding science hath me maad so bare,
 That I have no good, wher that ever I fare;
 And yet I am endetted so ther-by
 Of gold that I have borwed, trewely,
 That whyl I live, I shal it quyte never.
 Lat every man be war by me for ever!
 What maner man that casteth him ther-to,
 If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do.
 So helpe me god, ther-by shal he nat winne,
 But empte his purs, and make his wittes thinne.
 And whan he, thurgh his madnes and folye,
 Hath lost his owene good thurgh Iupartye,
 Thanne he excyteth other folk ther-to,
 To lese hir good as he him-self hath do.
 For unto shrewes loye it is and ese
 To have hir felawes in peyne and disese;
 Thus was I ones lerned of a clerk.
 Of that no charge, I wol speke of our werk.
 Whan we been ther as we shul exercyse
 Our elvish craft, we semen wonder wyse,
 Our termes been so clergial and so queynte.
 I blowe the fyr til that myn herte feynte.
 What sholde I tellen ech proporcoun
 Of thinges whiche that we werche upon,
 As on fyve or sixe ounces, may wel be,
 Of silver or som other quantite,
 And bisie me to telle yow the names
 Of orpiment, brent bones, yren squames,

That into poudre grounden been ful smal?
And in an erthen potte how put is al,
And salt y-put in, and also papeer,
Biforn thise poudres that I speke of heer,
And wel y-covered with a lampe of glas,
And mochel other thing which that ther was?
And of the pot and glasses enluting,
That of the eyre mighte passe out no-thing?
And of the esy fyr and smart also,
Which that was maad, and of the care and wo
That we hadde in our matires sublyming,
And in amalgaming and calcening
Of quik-silver, y-clept Mercurie crude?
For alle our sleighes we can nat conclude.
Our orpiment and sublymed Mercurie,
Our grounden litarge eek on the porphurie,
Of ech of thise of ounces a certeyn
Nought helpeth us, our labour is in veyn.
Ne eek our spirites ascencioun,
Ne our materes that lyen al fixe adoun,
Mowe in our werking no-thing us avayle.
For lost is al our labour and travayle,
And al the cost, a twenty devel weye,
Is lost also, which we upon it leye.
Ther is also ful many another thing
That is unto our craft apertening;
Though I by ordre hem nat reherce can,
By-cause that I am a lewed man,
Yet wol I telle hem as they come to minde,
Though I ne can nat sette hem in hir kinde;
As bole armoniak, verdegrees, boras,
And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas,
Our urinales and our descensories,
Violes, croslets, and sublymatories,
Cucurbites, and alembykes eek,
And othere swiche, dere y-nough a leek.
Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,
Watres rubifying and boles galle,
Arsenik, sal armoniak, and brimstoon;
And herbes coude I telle eek many oon,
As egremoine, valerian, and lunarie,
And othere swiche, if that me liste tarie.
Our lampes brenning bothe night and day,
To bringe aboute our craft, if that we may.
Our fourneys eek of calcinacioun,
And of watres albificacioun,
Unslekked lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,
Poudres diverse, assches, dong, pisse, and cley,
Cered pokets, sal peter, vitriole;
And divers fyres maad of wode and cole;
Sal tartre, alkaly, and sal preparat,
And combust materes and coagulat,
Cley maad with hors or mannes heer, and oile
Of tartre, alum, glas, berm, wort, and argoile,
Resalgar, and our materes enbibing;

And eek of our materes encorporing,
 And of our silver citrinacioun,
 Our cementing and fermentacioun,
 Our ingottes, testes, and many mo.
 I wol yow telle, as was me taught also,
 The foure spirites and the bodies sevene,
 By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem nevene.
 The firste spirit quik-silver called is,
 The second orpiment, the thridde, y-wis,
 Sal armoniak, and the ferthe brimstoon.
 The bodies sevene eek, lo! hem heer anon:
 Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,
 Mars yren, Mercurie quik-silver we clepe,
 Saturnus leed, and Iupiter is tin,
 And Venus coper, by my fader kin!
 This cursed craft who-so wol exercyse,
 He shal no good han that him may suffyse;
 For al the good he spendeth ther-about, e,
 He lese shal, ther-of have I no doute.
 Who-so that listeth outhen his folye,
 Lat him come forth, and lerne multiplie;
 And every man that oght hath in his cofre,
 Lat him appere, and wexe a filosofre.
 Ascaunce that craft is so light to lere?
 Nay, nay, god woot, al be he monk or frere,
 Preest or chanoun, or any other wight,
 Though he sitte at his book bothe day and night,
 In lernyng of this elvish nyce lore,
 Al is in veyn, and parde, mochel more!
 To lerne a lewed man this subtiltee,
 Fy! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat be;
 Al conne he letterure, or conne he noon,
 As in effect, he shal finde it al oon.
 For bothe two, by my savacioun,
 Concluden, in multiplicacioun,
 Y-lyke wel, whan they han al y-do;
 This is to seyn, they faylen bothe two.
 Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille
 Of watres corosif and of limaille,
 And of bodyes mollificacioun,
 And also of hir induracioun,
 Oiles, ablucions, and metal fusible,
 To tellen al wolde passen any bible
 That o-wher is; wherfor, as for the beste,
 Of alle thise names now wol I me reste.
 For, as I trowe, I have yow told y-nowe
 To reyse a feend, al loke he never so rowe.
 A! nay! lat be; the philosophres stoon,
 Elixir clept, we sechen faste echoon;
 For hadde we him, than were we siker y-now.
 But, unto god of heven I make avow,
 For al our craft, whan we han al y-do,
 And al our sleighte, he wol nat come us to.
 He hath y-maad us spenden mochel good,
 For sorwe of which almost we wexen wood,

But that good hope crepeth in our herte,
Supposinge ever, though we sore smerte,
To be releved by him afterward;
Swich supposing and hope is sharp and hard;
I warne yow wel, it is to seken ever;
That futur temps hath maad men to dissever,
In trust ther-of, from al that ever they hadde.
Yet of that art they can nat wexen sadde,
For unto hem it is a bitter swete;
So semeth it; for nadde they but a shete
Which that they mighte wrappe hem inne a-night,
And a bak to walken inne by day-light,
They wolde hem selle and spenden on this craft;
They can nat stinte til no-thing be laft.
And evermore, wher that ever they goon,
Men may hem knowe by smel of brimstoon;
For al the world, they stinken as a goot;
Her savour is so rammish and so hoot,
That, though a man from hem a myle be,
The savour wol infecte him, trusteth me;
Lo, thus by smelling and threedbare array,
If that men liste, this folk they knowe may.
And if a man wol aske hem prively,
Why they been clothed so unthriftily,
They right anon wol rownen in his ere,
And seyn, that if that they espyed were,
Men wolde hem slee, by-cause of hir science;
Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence!
Passe over this; I go my tale un-to.
Er than the pot be on the fyr y-do,
Of metals with a certein quantite,
My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he—
Now he is goon, I dar seyn boldely—
For, as men seyn, he can don craftily;
Algate I wool wel he hath swich a name,
And yet ful ofte he renneth in a blame;
And wite ye how? ful ofte it happeth so,
The pot to-breketh, and farewell! al is go!
Thise metals been of so greet violence,
Our walles mowe nat make hem resistance,
But if they weren wroght of lym and stoon;
They percen so, and thurgh the wal they goon,
And somme of hem sinken in-to the ground—
Thus han we lost by tymes many a pound—
And somme are scatered al the floor aboute,
Somme lepe in-to the roof; with-outen doute,
Though that the feend noght in our sighte him shewe,
I trowe he with us be, that ilke shrewe!
In helle wher that he is lord and sire,
Nis ther more wo, ne more rancour ne ire.
Whan that our pot is broke, as I have sayd,
Every man chit, and halt him yvel apayd.
Som seyde, it was long on the fyr-making,
Som seyde, nay! it was on the blowing;
(Than was I fered, for that was myn office);

'Straw!' quod the thridde, 'ye been lewed and nyce,
 It was nat tempred as it oghte be.'
 'Nay!' quod the ferthe, 'stint, and herkne me;
 By-cause our fyr ne was nat maad of beech,
 That is the cause, and other noon, so theech!'
 I can nat telle wher-on it was long,
 But wel I wot greet stryf is us among.
 'What!' quod my lord, 'ther is na-more to done,
 Of thise perils I wol be war eft-sone;
 I am right siker that the pot was crased.
 Be as be may, be ye no-thing amased;
 As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swythe,
 Plukke up your hertes, and beth gladde and blythe.'
 The mullok on an hepe y-sweped was,
 And on the floor y-cast a canevas,
 And al this mullok in a sive y-throwe,
 And sifted, and y-piked many a throwe.
 'Pardee,' quod oon, 'somwhat of our metal
 Yet is ther heer, though that we han nat al.
 Al-though this thing mishapped have as now,
 Another tyme it may be wel y-now,
 Us moste putte our good in aventure;
 A marchant, parde! may nat ay endure,
 Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee;
 Somtyme his good is drenched in the see,
 And somtym comth it sauf un-to the londe.'
 'Pees!' quod my lord, 'the next tyme I wol fonde
 To bringe our craft al in another plyte;
 And but I do, sirs, lat me han the wyte;
 Ther was defaute in som-what, wel I woot.'
 Another seyde, the fyr was over hoot:—
 But, be it hoot or cold, I dar seye this,
 That we concluden evermore amis.
 We fayle of that which that we wolden have,
 And in our madnesse evermore we rave.
 And whan we been togidres everichoon,
 Every man semeth a Salomon.
 But al thing which that shyneth as the gold
 Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it told;
 Ne every appel that is fair at yë
 Ne is nat good, what-so men clappe or crye.
 Right so, lo! fareth it amonges us;
 He that semeth the wysest, by Iesus!
 Is most fool, whan it cometh to the preef;
 And he that semeth trewest is a theef;
 That shul ye knowe, er that I fro yow wende,
 By that I of my tale have maad an ende.
Explicit prima pars. Et sequitur pars secunda.
 Ther is a chanoun of religioun
 Amonges us, wolde infecte al a toun,
 Though it as greet were as was Ninivee,
 Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three.
 His sleighes and his infinit falsnesse
 Ther coude no man wryten, as I gesse,
 Thogh that he mighte liven a thousand yeer.

In al this world of falshede nis his peer;
For in his termes so he wolde him winde,
And speke his wordes in so sly a kinde,
Whan he commune shal with any wight,
That he wol make him doten anon right,
But it a feend be, as him-selven is.
Ful many a man hath he bigyled er this,
And wol, if that he live may a whyle;
And yet men ryde and goon ful many a myle
Him for to seke and have his aqueyntaunce,
Noght knowinge of his false governaunce.
And if yow list to yeve me audience,
I wol it tellen heer in your presence.
But worshipful chanouns religious,
Ne demeth nat that I sclaudre your hous,
Al-though my tale of a chanoun be.
Of every ordre som shrewe is, parde,
And god forbede that al a companye
Sholde rewe a singuler mannes folye.
To sclaudre yow is no-thing myn entente,
But to correcten that is mis I mente.
This tale was nat only told for yow,
But eek for othere mo; ye woot wel how
That, among Cristes apostelles twelve,
Ther nas no traytour but Iudas him-selve.
Than why sholde al the remenant have blame
That giltles were? by yow I seye the same.
Save only this, if ye wol herkne me,
If any Iudas in your covent be,
Remeveth him bitymes, I yow rede,
If shame or los may causen any drede.
And beth no-thing displeased, I yow preye,
But in this cas herkneth what I shal seye.
In London was a preest, an annueleer,
That therin dwelled hadde many a yeer,
Which was so plesaunt and so servisable
Unto the wyf, wher-as he was at table,
That she wolde suffre him no-thing for to paye
For bord ne clothing, wente he never so gaye;
And spending-silver hadde he right y-now.
Therof no fors; I wol precede as now,
And telle forth my tale of the chanoun,
That broghte this preest to confusioun.
This false chanoun cam up-on a day
Unto this preestes chambre, wher he lay,
Biseching him to lene him a certeyn
Of gold, and he wolde quyte it him ageyn.
'Lene me a mark,' quod he, 'but dayes three,
And at my day I wol it quytten thee.
And if so be that thou me finde fals,
Another day do hange me by the hals!'
This preest him took a mark, and that as swythe,
And this chanoun him thanked ofte sythe,
And took his leve, and wente forth his weye,
And at the thridde day broghte his moneye,

And to the preest he took his gold agayn,
 Wherof this preest was wonder glad and fayn.
 'Certes,' quod he, 'no-thing anoyeth me
 To lene a man a noble, or two or three,
 Or what thing were in my possessioun,
 Whan he so trewe is of condicioun,
 That in no wyse he breke wol his day;
 To swich a man I can never seye nay.'
 'What!' quod this chanoun, 'sholde I be untrewe?
 Nay, that were thing y-fallen al of-newe.
 Trouthe is a thing that I wol ever kepe
 Un-to that day in which that I shal crepe
 In-to my grave, and elles god forbede;
 Bileveth this as siker as is your crede.
 God thanke I, and in good tyme be it sayd,
 That ther was never man yet yvel apayd
 For gold ne silver that he to me lente,
 Ne never falshede in myn herte I mente.
 And sir,' quod he, 'now of my privetee,
 Sin ye so goodlich han been un-to me,
 And kythed to me so greet gentillesse,
 Somwhat to quyte with your kindenesse,
 I wol yow shewe, and, if yow list to lere,
 I wol yow teche pleyntly the manere,
 How I can werken in philosophye.
 Taketh good heed, ye shul wel seen at yë,
 That I wol doon a maistrie er I go.'
 'Ye,' quod the preest, 'ye, sir, and wol ye so?
 Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertely!'
 'At your comandement, sir, trewely,'
 Quod the chanoun, 'and elles god forbede!'
 Lo, how this thief coude his servyse bedede!
 Ful sooth it is, that swich profred servyse
 Stinketh, as witnessen thise olde wyse;
 And that ful sone I wol it verifye
 In this chanoun, rote of al trecherye,
 That ever-more delyt hath and gladnesse—
 Swich feendly thoughtes in his herte impresse—
 How Cristes peple he may to meschief bringe;
 God kepe us from his fals dissimulinge!
 Noght wiste this preest with whom that he delte,
 Ne of his harm cominge he no-thing felte.
 O sely preest! o sely innocent!
 With coveityse anon thou shall be blent!
 O gracelees, ful blind is thy conceit,
 No-thing ne artow war of the deceit
 Which that this fox y-shapen hath to thee!
 His wyly wrenches thou ne mayst nat flee.
 Wherfor, to go to the conclusioun
 That refereth to thy confusioun,
 Unhappy man! anon I wol me hye
 To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye,
 And eek the falsnesse of that other wrecche,
 As ferforth as that my conning may stretche.
 This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden wene?

Sir host, in feith, and by the hevenes quene,
It was another chanoun, and nat he,
That can an hundred fold more subtiltee!
He hath bitrayed folkes many tyme;
Of his falshede it dulleth me to ryme.
Ever whan that I speke of his falshede,
For shame of him my chekes wexen rede;
Algates, they biginnen for to glowe,
For reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,
In my visage; for fumes dyverse
Of metals, which ye han herd me reherce,
Consumed and wasted han my reednesse.
Now tak heed of this chanouns cursednesse!
'Sir,' quod he to the preest, 'lat your man gon
For quik-silver, that we it hadde anon;
And lat him bringen ounces two or three;
And whan he comth, as faste shul ye see
A wonder thing, which ye saugh never er this.'
'Sir,' quod the preest, 'it shall be doon, y-wis.'
He bad his servant fecchen him this thing,
And he al redy was at his bidding,
And wente him forth, and cam anon agayn
With this quik-silver, soothly for to sayn,
And took thise ounces three to the chanoun;
And he hem leyde fayre and wel adoun,
And bad the servant coles for to bringe,
That he anon mighte go to his werkinge.
The coles right anon weren y-fet,
And this chanoun took out a crosselet
Of his bosom, and shewed it the preest.
'This instrument,' quod he, 'which that thou seest,
Tak in thyn hand, and put thy-self ther-inne
Of this quik-silver an ounce, and heer biginne,
In the name of Crist, to wexe a filosofre.
Ther been ful fewe, whiche that I wolde profre
To shewen hem thus muche of my science.
For ye shul seen heer, by experience,
That this quik-silver wol I mortifye
Right in your sighte anon, withouten lye,
And make it as good silver and as fyn
As ther is any in your purs or myn,
Or elleswher, and make it malliable;
And elles, holdeth me fals and unable
Amonges folk for ever to appere!
I have a poudre heer, that coste me dere,
Shal make al good, for it is cause of al
My conning, which that I yow shewen shal.
Voydeth your man, and lat him be ther-oute,
And shet the dore, whyls we been aboute
Our privetee, that no man us espye
Whyls that we werke in this philosophye.'
Al as he bad, fulfilled was in dede,
This ilke servant anon-right out yede,
And his maister shette the dore anon,
And to hir labour speedily they gon.

This preest, at this cursed chanouns bidding,
 Up-on the fyr anon sette this thing,
 And blew the fyr, and bisied him ful faste;
 And this chanoun in-to the croslet caste
 A poudre, noot I wher-of that it was
 Y-maad, other of chalk, other of glas,
 Or som-what elles, was nat worth a flye,
 To blynde with the preest; and bad him hye
 The coles for to couchen al above
 The croslet, 'for, in tokening I thee love,'
 Quod this chanoun, 'thyn owene hondes two
 Shul werche al thing which that shal heer be do.'
 'Graunt mercy,' quod the preest, and was ful glad,
 And couched coles as the chanoun bad.
 And whyle he bisy was, this feendly wrecche,
 This fals chanoun, the foule feend him fecche!
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole,
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,
 And ther-in put was of silver lymaille
 An ounce, and stopped was, with-uten fayle,
 The hole with wex, to kepe the lymail in.
 And understondeth, that this false gin
 Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore;
 And othere thinges I shal telle more
 Herafterward, which that he with him broghte;
 Er he cam ther, him to bigyle he thoghte,
 And so he dide, er that they wente a-twinne;
 Til he had torned him, coude he not blinne.
 It dulleth me whan that I of him speke,
 On his falshede fayn wolde I me wreke,
 If I wiste how; but he is heer and ther:
 He is so variaunt, he abit no-wher.
 But taketh heed now, sirs, for goddes love!
 He took his cole of which I spak above,
 And in his hond he baar it prively.
 And whyls the preest couchede busily
 The coles, as I tolde yow er this,
 This chanoun seyde, 'freend, ye doon amis;
 This is nat couched as it oghte be;
 But sone I shal amenden it,' quod he.
 'Now lat me medle therwith but a whyle,
 For of yow have I pitee, by seint Gyle!
 Ye been right hoot, I see wel how ye swete,
 Have heer a cloth, and wype away the wete.'
 And whyles that the preest wyped his face,
 This chanoun took his cole with harde grace,
 And leyde it above, up-on the middeward
 Of the croslet, and blew wel afterward,
 Til that the coles gonne faste brenne.
 'Now yeve us drinke,' quod the chanoun thenne,
 'As swythe al shal be wel, I undertake;
 Sitte we doun, and lat us mery make.'
 And whan that this chanounes bechen cole
 Was brent, al the lymaille, out of the hole,
 Into the croslet fil anon adoun;

And so it moste nedes, by resoun,
Sin it so even aboven couched was;
But ther-of wiste the preest no-thing, alas!
He demed alle the coles y-liche good,
For of the sleighte he no-thing understood.
And whan this alkamistre saugh his tyme,
'Rys up,' quod he, 'sir preest, and stondeth by me;
And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,
Goth, walketh forth, and bring us a chalk-stoon;
For I wol make oon of the same shap
That is an ingot, if I may han hap.
And bringeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne,
Ful of water, and ye shul see wel thanne
How that our bisinesse shal thryve and preve.
And yet, for ye shul han no misbileve
Ne wrong conceit of me in your absence,
I ne wol nat been out of your presence,
But go with yow, and come with yow ageyn.'
The chambre-dore, shortly for to seyn,
They opened and shette, and wente hir weye.
And forth with hem they carieden the keye,
And come agayn with-outen any delay.
What sholde I tarien al the longe day?
He took the chalk, and shoop it in the wyse
Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.
I seye, he took out of his owene sleve,
A teyne of silver (yvele mote he cheve!)
Which that ne was nat but an ounce of weighte;
And taketh heed now of his cursed sleighte!
He shoop his ingot, in lengthe and eek in brede,
Of this teyne, with-outen any drede,
So slyly, that the preest it nat espyde;
And in his sleve agayn he gan it hyde;
And fro the fyr he took up his matere,
And in thingot putte it with mery chere,
And in the water-vessel he it caste
Whan that him luste, and bad the preest as faste,
'Look what ther is, put in thyn hand and grope,
Thow finde shalt ther silver, as I hope;
What, devel of helle! sholde it elles be?
Shaving of silver silver is, pardee!'
He putte his hond in, and took up a teyne
Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne
Was this preest, whan he saugh that it was so.
'Goddess blessing, and his modres also,
And alle halwes have ye, sir chanoun,'
Seyde this preest, 'and I hir malisoun,
But, and ye vouche-sauf to techen me
This noble craft and this subtilitee,
I wol be youre, in al that ever I may!'
Quod the chanoun, 'yet wol I make assay
The second tyme, that ye may taken hede
And been expert of this, and in your nede
Another day assaye in myn absence
This disciplyne and this crafty science.

Lat take another ounce,' quod he tho,
 'Of quik-silver, with-uten wordes mo,
 And do ther-with as ye han doon er this
 With that other, which that now silver is.'
 This preest him bisieth in al that he can
 To doon as this chanoun, this cursed man,
 Comanded him, and faste he blew the fyr,
 For to come to theeffect of his desyr.
 And this chanoun, right in the mene whyle,
 Al redy was, the preest eft to bigyle,
 And, for a countenance, in his hande he bar
 An holwe stikke (tak keep and be war!)
 In the ende of which an ounce, and na-more,
 Of silver lymail put was, as bifore
 Was in his cole, and stopped with wex weel
 For to kepe in his lymail every deel.
 And whyl this preest was in his bisnesse,
 This chanoun with his stikke gan him dresse
 To him anon, and his powder caste in
 As he did er; (the devel out of his skin
 Him torne, I pray to god, for his falschede;
 For he was ever fals in thoght and dede);
 And with this stikke, above the croslet,
 That was ordeyned with that false get,
 He stired the coles, til relente gan
 The wex agayn the fyr, as every man,
 But it a fool be, woot wel it mot nede,
 And al that in the stikke was out yede,
 And in the croslet hastily it fel.
 Now gode sirs, what wol ye bet than wel?
 Whan that this preest thus was bigyled ageyn,
 Supposing noght but trouthe, soth to seyn,
 He was so glad, that I can nat expresse
 In no manere his mirthe and his gladnesse;
 And to the chanoun he profred eftsone
 Body and good; 'ye,' quod the chanoun sone,
 'Though povre I be, crafty thou shalt me finde;
 I warne thee, yet is ther more bihinde.
 Is ther any coper her-inne?' seyde he.
 'Ye,' quod the preest, 'sir, I trowe wel ther be.'
 'Elles go by us som, and that as swythe,
 Now, gode sir, go forth thy wey and hy the.'
 He wente his wey, and with the coper cam,
 And this chanoun it in his handes nam,
 And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.
 Al to simple is my tonge to pronounce,
 As ministre of my wit, the doublesnesse
 Of this chanoun, rote of al cursednesse.
 He semed freendly to hem that knewe him noght,
 But he was feendly bothe in herte and thoght.
 It werieth me to telle of his falsnesse,
 And nathelees yet wol I it expresse,
 To thentente that men may be war therby,
 And for noon other cause, trewely.
 He putte his ounce of coper in the croslet,

And on the fyr as swythe he hath it set,
And caste in poudre, and made the preest to blowe,
And in his werking for to stoupe lowe,
As he dide er, and al nas but a lape;
Right as him liste, the preest he made his ape;
And afterward in the ingot he it caste,
And in the panne putte it at the laste
Of water, and in he putte his owene hond.
And in his sleve (as ye biforn-hond
Herde me telle) he hadde a silver teyne.
He slyly took it out, this cursed heyne—
Unwiting this preest of his false craft—
And in the pannes botme he hath it laft;
And in the water rombled to and fro,
And wonder prively took up also
The coper teyne, noght knowing this preest,
And hidde it, and him hente by the breest,
And to him spak, and thus seyde in his game,
'Stoupeth adoun, by god, ye be to blame,
Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whyl-er,
Putte in your hand, and loketh what is ther.'
This preest took up this silver teyne anon,
And thanne seyde the chanoun, 'lat us gon
With thise three teynes, which that we han wroght,
To som goldsmith, and wite if they been oght.
For, by my feith, I nolde, for myn hood,
But-if that they were silver, fyn and good,
And that as swythe preved shal it be.'
Un-to the goldsmith with thise teynes three
They wente, and putte thise teynes in assay
To fyr and hamer; mighte no man sey nay,
But that they weren as hem oghte be.
This sotted preest, who was gladder than he?
Was never brid gladder agayn the day,
Ne nightingale, in the sesoun of May,
Nas never noon that luste bet to singe;
Ne lady lustier in carolinge
Or for to speke of love and wommanhede,
Ne knight in armes to doon an hardy dede
To stonde in grace of his lady dere,
Than had this preest this sory craft to lere;
And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde,
'For love of god, that for us alle deyde,
And as I may deserve it un-to yow,
What shal this receit coste? telleth now!'
'By our lady,' quod this chanoun, 'it is dere,
I warne yow wel; for, save I and a frere,
In Engelond ther can no man it make.'
'No fors,' quod he, 'now, sir, for goddes sake,
What shal I paye? telleth me, I preye.'
'Y-wis,' quod he, 'it is ful dere, I seye;
Sir, at o word, if that thee list it have,
Ye shul paye fourty pound, so god me save!
And, nere the freendship that ye dide er this
To me, ye sholde paye more, y-wis.'

This preest the somme of fourty pound anon
 Of nobles fette, and took hem everichon
 To this chanoun, for this ilke receit;
 Al his werking nas but fraude and deceit.
 'Sir preest,' he seyde, 'I kepe han no loos
 Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos;
 And as ye love me, kepeth it secree;
 For, and men knewe al my subtilitee,
 By god, they wolden han so greet envye
 To me, by-cause of my philosophye,
 I sholde be deed, ther were non other weye.'
 'God it forbede!' quod the preest, 'what sey ye?'
 Yet hadde I lever spenden al the good
 Which that I have (and elles wexe I wood!)
 Than that ye sholden falle in swich mescheef.'
 'For your good wil, sir, have ye right good preef,'
 Quod the chanoun, 'and far-wel, grant mercy!'
 He wente his wey and never the preest him sy
 After that day; and whan that this preest sholde
 Maken assay, at swich tyme as he wolde,
 Of this receit, far-wel! it wolde nat be!
 Lo, thus byiaped and bigyled was he!
 Thus maketh he his introduccioun
 To bringe folk to hir destruccioun.—
 Considereth, sirs, how that, in ech estaat,
 Bitwixe men and gold ther is debaat
 So ferforth, that unnethes is ther noon.
 This multiplying blent so many oon,
 That in good feith I trowe that it be
 The cause grettest of swich scarsetee.
 Philosophres speken so mistily
 In this craft, that men can nat come therby,
 For any wit that men han now a-dayes.
 They mowe wel chiteren, as doon thise Iayes,
 And in her termes sette hir lust and payne,
 But to hir purpos shul they never atteyne.
 A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught,
 To multiplye, and bringe his good to naught!
 Lo! swich a lucre is in this lusty game,
 A mannes mirthe it wol torne un-to grame,
 And empten also grete and hevye purses,
 And maken folk for to purchasen curses
 Of hem, that han hir good therto y-lent.
 O! fy! for shame! they that han been brent,
 Allas! can they nat flee the fyres hete?
 Ye that it use, I rede ye it lete,
 Lest ye lese al; for bet than never is late.
 Never to thryve were to long a date.
 Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it never finde;
 Ye been as bolde as is Bayard the blinde,
 That blundreth forth, and peril casteth noon;
 He is as bold to renne agayn a stoon
 As for to goon besydes in the weye.
 So faren ye that multiplye, I seye.
 If that your yën can nat seen aright,

Loke that your minde lakke nought his sight.
For, though ye loke never so brode, and stare,
Ye shul nat winne a myte on that chaffare,
But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.
Withdrawe the fyr, lest it to faste brenne;
Medleth na-more with that art, I mene,
For, if ye doon, your thrift is goon ful clene.
And right as swythe I wol yow tellen here,
What philosophres seyn in this matere.
Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newe Toun,
As his Rosarie maketh mencioun;
He seith right thus, with-outen any lye,
'Ther may no man Mercurie mortifye,
But it be with his brother knowleching.
How that he, which that first seyde this thing,
Of philosophres fader was, Hermes;
He seith, how that the dragoun, doutelees,
Ne deyeth nat, but-if that he be slayn
With his brother; and that is for to sayn,
By the dragoun, Mercurie and noon other
He understood; and brimstoon by his brother,
That out of *sol* and *luna* were y-drawe.
And therfor,' seyde he, 'tak heed to my sawe,
Let no man bisy him this art for to seche,
But-if that he thentencioun and speche
Of philosophres understonde can;
And if he do, he is a lewed man.
For this science and this conning,' quod he,
'Is of the secree of secrees, parde.'
Also ther was a disciple of Plato,
That on a tyme seyde his maister to,
As his book Senior wol bere witnesse,
And this was his demande in soothfastnesse:
'Tel me the name of the privy stoon?'
And Plato answerde unto him anoon,
'Tak the stoon that Titanos men name.'
'Which is that?' quod he. 'Magnesia is the same,'
Seyde Plato. 'Ye, sir, and is it thus?'
This is *ignotum per ignotius*.
What is Magnesia, good sir, I yow preye?'
'It is a water that is maad, I seye,
Of elementes foure,' quod Plato.
'Tel me the rote, good sir,' quod he tho,
'Of that water, if that it be your wille?'
'Nay, nay,' quod Plato, 'certein, that I nille.
The philosophres sworn were everichoon,
That they sholden discovere it un-to noon,
Ne in no book it wryte in no manere;
For un-to Crist it is so leef and dere
That he wol nat that it discovered be,
But wher it lyketh to his deitee
Man for tenspyre, and eek for to defende
Whom that him lyketh; lo, this is the ende.'
Thanne conclude I thus; sith god of hevene
Ne wol nat that the philosophres nevene

How that a man shal come un-to this stoon,
 I rede, as for the beste, lete it goon.
 For who-so maketh god his adversarie,
 As for to werken any thing in contrarie
 Of his wil, certes, never shal he thryve,
 Thogh that he multiplie terme of his lyve.
 And ther a poynt; for ended is my tale;
 God sende every trewe man bote of his bale!—Amen.
Here is ended the Chanouns Yemannes Tale.

THE MANCIPLE'S PROLOGUE.

Here folweth the Prologe of the Maunciples Tale.

Wite ye nat wher ther stant a litel toun
 Which that y-cleped is Bob-up-and-doun,
 Under the Blee, in Caunterbury weye?
 Ther gan our hoste for to Iape and pleye,
 And seyde, 'sirs, what! Dun is in the myre!
 Is ther no man, for preyere ne for hyre,
 That wol awake our felawe heer bihinde?
 A theef mighte him ful lightly robbe and binde.
 See how he nappeth! see, for cokkes bones,
 As he wol falle from his hors at ones.
 Is that a cook of Londoun, with meschaunce?
 Do him come forth, he knoweth his penaunce,
 For he shal telle a tale, by my fey!
 Al-though it be nat worth a botel hey.
 Awake, thou cook,' quod he, 'god yeve thee sorwe,
 What eyleth thee to slepe by the morwe?
 Hastow had fleen al night, or artow dronke,
 Or hastow with som quene al night y-swonke,
 So that thou mayst nat holden up thyn heed?'
 This cook, that was ful pale and no-thing reed,
 Seyde to our host, 'so god my soule blesse,
 As ther is falle on me swich hevinesse,
 Noot I nat why, that me were lever slepe
 Than the beste galoun wyn in Chepe.'
 'Wel,' quod the maunciple, 'if it may doon ese
 To thee, sir cook, and to no wight displese
 Which that heer rydeth in this companye,
 And that our host wol, of his curteisye,
 I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale;
 For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale,
 Thyn yën daswen eek, as that me thinketh,
 And wel I woot, thy breeth ful soure stinketh,
 That sheweth wel thou art not wel disposed;
 Of me, certein, thou shalt nat been y-glosed.
 Se how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight,
 As though he wolde us swolwe anon-right.
 Hold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kin!
 The devel of helle sette his foot ther-in!
 Thy cursed breeth infecte wol us alle;
 Fy, stinking swyn, fy! foule moot thee falle!
 A! taketh heed, sirs, of this lusty man.
 Now, swete sir, wol ye lusten atte fan?

Ther-to me thinketh ye been wel y-shape!
I trowe that ye dronken han wyn ape,
And that is whan men pleyen with a straw.
And with this speche the cook wex wrooth and wraw,
And on the maunciple he gan nodde faste
For lakke of speche, and doun the hors him caste,
Wher as he lay, til that men up him took;
This was a fayr chivachee of a cook!
Allas! he nadde holde him by his ladel!
And, er that he agayn were in his sadel,
Ther was greet showving bothe to and fro,
To lifte him up, and muchel care and wo,
So unweldy was this sory palled gost.
And to the maunciple thanne spak our host,
'By-cause drink hath dominacioun
Upon this man, by my savacioun
I trowe he lewedly wolde telle his tale.
For, were it wyn, or old or moysty ale,
That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,
And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.
He hath also to do more than y-nough
To kepe him and his capel out of slough;
And, if he falle from his capel eft-sone,
Than shul we alle have y-nough to done,
In lifting up his hevvy dronken cors.
Telle on thy tale, of him make I no fors.
But yet, maunciple, in feith thou art to nyce,
Thus openly repreve him of his vyce.
Another day he wol, peraventure,
Reclayme thee, and bringe thee to lure;
I mene, he speke wol of smale thinges,
As for to pinchen at thy rekeninges,
That wer not honeste, if it cam to preef.
'No,' quod the maunciple, 'that were a greet mescheef!
So mighte he lightly bringe me in the snare.
Yet hadde I lever payen for the mare
Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve;
I wol nat wratthe him, al-so mote I thryve!
That that I spak, I seyde it in my bourde;
And wite ye what? I have heer, in a gourde,
A draught of wyn, ye, of a rype grape,
And right anon ye shul seen a good lape.
This cook shal drinke ther-of, if I may;
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay!
And certainly, to tellen as it was,
Of this vessel the cook drank faste, alas!
What neded him? he drank y-nough biforn.
And whan he hadde pouped in this horn,
To the maunciple he took the gourde agayn;
And of that drinke the cook was wonder fayn,
And thanked him in swich wyse as he coude.
Than gan our host to laughen wonder loude,
And seyde, 'I see wel, it is necessarie,
Wher that we goon, good drink we with us carie;
For that wol turne rancour and disese

Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.
 O thou Bachus, y-blessed be thy name,
 That so canst turnen earnest in-to game!
 Worship and thank be to thy deitee!
 Of that matere ye gete na-more of me.
 Tel on thy tale, maunciple, I thee preye.'
 'Wel, sir,' quod he, 'now herkneth what I seye.'
Thus endeth the Prologe of the Manciple.

THE MAUNCIPLES TALE.

Here biginneth the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

Whan Phebus dwelled here in this erthe adoun,
 As olde bokes maken menciou,un,
 He was the moste lusty bachiler
 In al this world, and eek the beste archer;
 He slow Phitoun, the serpent, as he lay
 Slepinge agayn the sonne upon a day;
 And many another noble worthy dede
 He with his bowe wroghte, as men may rede.
 Pleyen he coude on every minstralcy, e,
 And singen, that it was a melody, e,
 To heren of his clere vois the soun.
 Certes the king of Thebes, Amphiou,un,
 That with his singing walled that citee,
 Coude never singen half so wel as he.
 Therto he was the semelieste man
 That is or was, sith that the world bigan.
 What nedeth it his fetures to discryve?
 For in this world was noon so fair on lyve.
 He was ther-with fulfild of gentillesse,
 Of honour, and of parfit worthinesse.
 This Phebus, that was flour of bachelrye,
 As wel in fredom as in chivalrye,
 For his desport, in signe eek of victorie
 Of Phitoun, so as telleth us the storie,
 Was wont to beren in his hand a bowe.
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a crowe,
 Which in a cage he fostred many a day,
 And taughte it speken, as men teche a lay.
 Whyt was this crowe, as is a snow-whyte swan,
 And countrefete the speche of every man
 He coude, whan he sholde telle a tale.
 Ther-with in al this world no nightingale
 Ne coude, by an hondred thousand deel,
 Singen so wonder merily and weel.
 Now had this Phebus in his hous a wyf,
 Which that he lovede more than his lyf,
 And night and day dide ever his diligence
 Hir for to plese, and doon hir reverence,
 Save only, if the sothe that I shal sayn,
 Ialous he was, and wolde have hept hir fayn;
 For him were looth by-iaped for to be.
 And so is every wight in swich degree;
 But al in ydel, for it availleth noght.

A good wyf, that is clene of werk and thoght,
Sholde nat been kept in noon await, certayn;
And trewely, the labour is in vayn
To kepe a shrewe, for it wol nat be.
This holde I for a verray nycetee,
To spille labour, for to kepe wyves;
Thus writen olde clerkes in hir lyves.
But now to purpos, as I first bigan:
This worthy Phebus dooth all that he can
To plesen hir, weninge by swich plesaunce,
And for his manhede and his governaunce,
That no man sholde han put him from hir grace.
But god it woot, ther may no man embrace
As to destreyne a thing, which that nature
Hath naturelly set in a creature.
Tak any brid, and put it in a cage,
And do al thyn entente and thy corage
To fostre it tendrely with mete and drinke,
Of alle deyntees that thou canst bithinke,
And keep it al-so clenly as thou may;
Al-though his cage of gold be never so gay,
Yet hath this brid, by twenty thousand fold,
Lever in a forest, that is rude and cold,
Gon ete wormes and swich wrecchednesse.
For ever this brid wol doon his bisinesse
To escape out of his cage, if he may;
His libertee this brid desireth ay.
Lat take a cat, and fostre him wel with milk,
And tendre flesh, and make his couche of silk,
And lat him seen a mous go by the wal;
Anon he weyveth milk, and flesh, and al,
And every deyntee that is in that hous,
Swich appetyt hath he to ete a mous.
Lo, here hath lust his dominacioun,
And appetyt flemeth discrecioun.
A she-wolf hath also a vileins kinde;
The lewedeste wolf that she may finde,
Or leest of reputacion wol she take,
In tyme whan hir lust to han a make.
Alle thise ensamples speke I by thise men
That been untrewe, and no-thing by wommen.
For men han ever a likerous appetyt
On lower thing to parfourne hir delyt
Than on hir wyves, be they never so faire,
Ne never so trewe, ne so debonaire.
Flesh is so newefangel, with meschaunce,
That we ne conne in no-thing han plesaunce
That souneth in-to vertu any whyle.
This Phebus, which that thoghte upon no gyle,
Deceyved was, for al his Iolitee;
For under him another hadde she,
A man of litel reputacioun,
Noght worth to Phebus in comparisoun.
The more harm is; it happeth ofte so,
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and wo.

And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,
 His wyf anon hath for hir lemman sent,
 Hir lemman? certes, this is a knavish speche!
 Foryeveth it me, and that I yow biseche.
 The wyse Plato seith, as ye may rede,
 The word mot nede accorde with the dede.
 If men shal telle proprely a thing,
 The word mot cosin be to the werking.
 I am a boistous man, right thus seye I,
 Ther nis no difference, trewely,
 Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,
 If of hir body dishonest she be,
 And a povre wenche, other than this—
 If it so be, they werke bothe amis—
 But that the gentile, in estaat above,
 She shal be cleped his lady, as in love;
 And for that other is a povre womman,
 She shal be cleped his wenche, or his lemman.
 And, god it wool, myn owene dere brother,
 Men leyn that oon as lowe as lyth that other.
 Right so, bitwixe a titlelees tiraunt
 And an outlawe, or a thief erraunt,
 The same I seye, ther is no difference.
 To Alisaundre told was this sentence;
 That, for the tyrant is of gretter might,
 By force of meynee for to sleen doun-right,
 And brennen hous and hoom, and make al plain,
 Lo! therfor is he cleped a capitain;
 And, for the outlawe hath but smal meynee,
 And may nat doon so greet an harm as he,
 Ne bringe a contree to so greet mescheef,
 Men clepen him an outlawe or a thief.
 But, for I am a man noght textuel,
 I wol noght telle of textes never a del;
 I wol go to my tale, as I bigan.
 Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir lemman,
 Anon they wroghten al hir lust volage.
 The whyte crowe, that heng ay in the cage,
 Biheld hir werk, and seyde never a word.
 And whan that hoom was come Phebus, the lord,
 This crowe sang 'cokkow! cokkow! cokkow!'
 'What, brid?' quod Phebus, 'what song singestow?
 Ne were thou wont so merily to singe
 That to myn herte it was a reioisinge
 To here thy vois? allas! what song is this?'
 'By god,' quod he, 'I singe nat amis;
 Phebus,' quod he, 'for al thy worthinesse,
 For al thy beautee and thy gentillesse,
 For al thy song and al thy minstralcy,
 For al thy waiting, blered is thyn yē
 With oon of litel reputacioun,
 Noght worth to thee, as in comparisoun,
 The mountance of a gnat; so mote I thryve!
 For on thy bed thy wyf I saugh him swyve.'
 What wol ye more? the crowe anon him tolde,

By sadde tokenes and by wordes bolde,
How that his wyf had doon hir lecherye,
Him to gret shame and to gret vileinye;
And tolde him ofte, he saugh it with his yën.
This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,
Him thoughte his sorweful herte brast a-two;
His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a flo,
And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn.
This is theeffect, ther is na-more to sayn;
For sorwe of which he brak his minstralcye,
Bothe harpe, and lute, and giterne, and sautrye;
And eek he brak his arwes and his bowe.
And after that, thus spak he to the crowe:
'Traitour,' quod he, 'with tonge of scorioun,
Thou hast me broght to my confusioun!
Allas! that I was wroght! why nere I deed?
O dere wyf, o gemme of lustiheed,
That were to me so sad and eek so trewe,
Now lystow deed, with face pale of hewe,
Ful giltelees, that dorste I swere, y-wis!
O rakel hand, to doon so foule amis!
O trouble wit, o ire recchelees,
That unavysed smytest giltelees!
O wantrust, ful of fals suspecioun,
Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun?
O every man, be-war of rakelnesse,
Ne trowe no-thing with-outen strong witnesse;
Smyt nat to sone, er that ye witen why,
And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly
Er ye doon any execucioun,
Up-on your ire, for suspecioun.
Allas! a thousand folk hath rakel ire
Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the mire.
Allas! for sorwe I wol my-selven slee!'
And to the crowe, 'o false thief!' seyde he,
'I wol thee quyte anon thy false tale!
Thou songe whylom lyk a nightingale;
Now shaltow, false thief, thy song forgon,
And eek thy whyte fetheres everichon,
Ne never in al thy lyf ne shaltou speke.
Thus shal men on a traitour been awreke;
Thou and thyn of-spring ever shul be blake,
Ne never swete noise shul ye make,
But ever crye agayn tempest and rayn,
In tokeninge that thurgh thee my wyf is slayn.'
And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,
And pulled his whyte fetheres everichon,
And made him blak, and refte him al his song,
And eek his speche, and out at dore him slong
Un-to the devel, which I him bitake;
And for this caas ben alle crows blake.—
Lordings, by this ensample I yow preye,
Beth war, and taketh kepe what I seye:
Ne telleth never no man in your lyf
How that another man hath dight his wyf;

He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn.
 Daun Salomon, as wyse clerkes seyn,
 Techeth a man to kepe his tonge wel;
 But as I seyde, I am noght textuel.
 But nathelees, thus taughte me my dame:
 'My sone, thenk on the crowe, a goddes name;
 My sone, keep wel thy tonge and keep thy freend.
 A wikked tonge is worse than a feend.
 My sone, from a feend men may hem blesse;
 My sone, god of his endeles goodnesse
 Walled a tonge with teeth and lippes eke,
 For man sholde him avyse what he speke.
 My sone, ful ofte, for to muche speche,
 Hath many a man ben spilt, as clerkes teche;
 But for a litel speche avysely
 Is no men shent, to speke generally.
 My sone, thy tonge sholdestow restreyne
 At alle tyme, but whan thou doost thy peyne
 To speke of god, in honour and preyere.
 The firste vertu, sone, if thou wolt lere,
 Is to restreyne and kepe wel thy tonge.—
 Thus lerne children whan that they ben yonge.—
 My sone, of muchel speking yvel-avysed,
 Ther lasse speking hadde y-nough suffysed,
 Comth muchel harm, thus was me told and taught.
 In muchel speche sinne wanteth naught.
 Wostow wher-of a rakel tonge serveth?
 Right as a swerd forcutteth and forkerveth
 An arm a-two, my dere sone, right so
 A tonge cutteth frendship al a-two.
 A Iangler is to god abhominable;
 Reed Salomon, so wys and honorable;
 Reed David in his psalmes, reed Senekke.
 My sone, spek nat, but with thyn heed thou bekke.
 Dissimule as thou were deaf, if that thou here
 A Iangler speke of perilous matere.
 The Fleming seith, and lerne it, if thee leste,
 That litel Iangling causeth muchel reste.
 My sone, if thou no wikked word hast seyde,
 Thee thar nat drede for to be biwreyd;
 But he that hath misseyd, I dar wel sayn,
 He may by no wey clepe his word agayn.
 Thing that is seyde, is seyde; and forth it gooth,
 Though him repente, or be him leef or looth.
 He is his thral to whom that he hath sayd
 A tale, of which he is now yvel apayd.
 My sone, be war, and be non auctour newe
 Of tydinges, whether they ben false or trewe.
 Wher-so thou come, amonges hye or lowe,
 Kepe wel thy tonge, and thenk up-on the crowe.
Here is ended the Maunciples Tale of the Crowe.

THE PARSON'S PROLOGUE.**Here folweth the Prologe of the Persones Tale.**

By that the maunciple hadde his tale al ended,
 The sonne fro the south lyne was descended
 So lowe, that he nas nat, to my sighte,
 Degreës nyne and twenty as in highte.
 Foure of the klokke it was tho, as I gesse;
 For eleven foot, or litel more or lesse,
 My shadwe was at thilke tyme, as there,
 Of swich feet as my lengthe parted were
 In six feet equal of proporcioun.
 Ther-with the mones exaltacioun,
 I mene Libra, alwey gan ascende,
 As we were entringe at a thropes ende;
 For which our host, as he was wont to gye,
 As in this caas, our Ioly companye,
 Seyde in this wyse, 'lordings everichoon,
 Now lakketh us no tales mo than oon.
 Fulfild is my sentence and my decree;
 I trowe that we han herd of ech degree.
 Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce;
 I prey to god, so yeve him right good chaunce,
 That telleth this tale to us lustily.
 Sir preest,' quod he, 'artow a vicary?
 Or art a person? sey sooth, by thy fey!
 Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat our pley;
 For every man, save thou, hath told his tale,
 Unbokel, and shewe us what is in thy male;
 For trewely, me thinketh, by thy chere,
 Thou sholdest knitte up wel a greet matere.
 Tel us a tale anon, for cokkes bones!'
 This Persone him answerde, al at ones,
 'Thou getest fable noon y-told for me;
 For Paul, that wryteth unto Timothee,
 Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse,
 And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.
 Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
 Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?
 For which I seye, if that yow list to here
 Moralitee and vertuous matere,
 And thanne that ye wol yeve me audience,
 I wol ful fayn, at Cristes reverence,
 Do yow plesaunce leefful, as I can.
 But trusteth wel, I am a Southren man,
 I can nat geste—rum, ram, ruf—by lettre,
 Ne, god wot, rym holde I but litel better;
 And therfor, if yow list, I wol nat glose.
 I wol yow telle a mery tale in prose
 To knitte up al this feeste, and make an ende.
 And Iesu, for his grace, wit me sende
 To shewe yow the wey, in this viage,
 Of thilke parfit glorious pilgrimage
 That highte Ierusalem celestial.
 And, if ye vouche-sauf, anon I shal

Biginne upon my tale, for whiche I preye
 Telle your avys, I can no better seye.
 But nathelees, this meditacioun
 I putte it ay under correccioun
 Of clerkes, for I am nat textual;
 I take but the sentens, trusteth wel.
 Therfor I make protestacioun
 That I wol stonde to correccioun.
 Up-on this word we han assented sone,
 For, as us semed, it was for to done,
 To enden in som vertuous sentence,
 And for to yeve him space and audience;
 And bede our host he sholde to him seye,
 That alle we to telle his tale him preye.
 Our host hadde the wordes for us alle:—
 'Sir preest,' quod he, 'now fayre yow bifalle!
 Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly here'—
 And with that word he seyde in this manere—
 'Telleth,' quod he, 'your meditacioun.
 But hasteth yow, the sonne wol adoun;
 Beth fructuous, and that in litel space,
 And to do wel god sende yow his grace!'
Explicit prohemium.

THE PERSONES TALE.

Here biginneth the Persones Tale.

Ier. 6°. State super vias et videte et interrogate de viis antiquis, que sit via bona; et ambulate in ea, et inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris, &c.

§1. Our swete lord god of hevene, that no man wole perisse, but wole that we comen alle to the knoweleche of him, and to the blisful lyf that is perdurable, amonesteth us by the prophete Ieremie, that seith in this wyse: 'stondeþ upon the weyes, and seeth and axeth of olde pathes (that is to seyn, of olde sentences) which is the goode wey; and walketh in that wey, and ye shul finde reffreshinge for your soules,' &c. Manye been the weyes espirituels that leden folk to oure Lord Iesu Crist, and to the regne of glorie. Of whiche weyes, ther is a ful noble wey and a ful covenable, which may nat faile to man ne to womman, that thurgh sinne hath misgoon fro the righte wey of Ierusalem celestial; and this wey is cleped Penitence, of which man sholde gladly herknen and enquire with al his herte; to witen what is Penitence, and whennes it is cleped Penitence, and in how manye maneres been the accions or werkings of Penitence, and how manye spyces ther been of Penitence, and whiche thinges apertenen and bihoven to Penitence, and whiche thinges destourben Penitence.

§2. Seint Ambrose seith, that 'Penitence is the pleyninge of man for the gilt that he hath doon, and na-more to do any thing for which him oghte to pleyne.' And som doctour seith: 'Penitence is the waymentinge of man, that sorweth for his sinne and pyneth him-self for he hath misdoon.' Penitence, with certeyne circumstances, is verray repentance of a man that halt him-self in sorwe and other peyne for hise giltes. And for he shal be verray penitent, he shal first biwailen the sinnes that he hath doon, and stidefastly purposen in his herte to have shrift of mouthe, and to doon satisfaccioun, and never to doon thing for which him oghte more to biwayle or to compleyne, and to continue in goode werkes: or elles his repentance may nat availle. For as seith seint Isidre: 'he is a laper and a gabber, and no verray repentant, that eftsoone dooth thing, for which him oghte repente.' Wepinge, and nat for to stinte to doon sinne, may nat avaylle. But nathelees, men shal hope that every tyme that man falleth, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thurgh Penitence, if he have grace: but certainly it is greet doute. For as seith Seint Gregorie: 'unnethe aryseth he out of sinne, that is charged with the charge of yvel usage.' And therfore repentant folk, that stinte for to sinne, and forlete sinne er that sinne forlete hem, holy chirche holdeth hem siker of hir savacioun. And he that sinneth, and verrailly repenteth him in

his laste ende, holy chirche yet hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure lord Iesu Crist, for his repentaunce; but tak the siker wey.

§3. And now, sith I have declared yow what thing is Penitence, now shul ye understonde that ther been three accions of Penitence. The firste accion of Penitence is, that a man be baptized after that he hath sinned. Seint Augustin seith: 'but he be penitent for his olde sinful lyf, he may nat beginne the newe clene lif.' For certes, if he be baptized withouten penitence of his olde gilt, he receiveth the mark of baptisme, but nat the grace ne the remission of his sinnes, til he have repentance verray. Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly sinne after that they han received baptisme. The thridde defaute is, that men fallen in venial sinnes after hir baptisme, fro day to day. Ther-of seith Seint Augustin, that 'penitence of goode and humble folk is the penitence of every day.'

§4. The spyces of Penitence been three. That oon of hem is solempne, another is commune, and the thridde is privee. Thilke penance that is solempne, is in two maneres; as to be put out of holy chirche in lente, for slaughtre of children, and swich maner thing. Another is, whan a man hath sinned openly, of which sinne the fame is openly spoken in the cuntree; and thanne holy chirche by Iugement destreineth him for to do open penaunce. Commune penaunce is that preestes enioinen men comunly in certeyn caas; as for to goon, peraventure, naked in pilgrimages, or bare-foot. Privee penaunce is thilke that men doon alday for privee sinnes, of whiche we shryve us prively and receyve privee penaunce.

§5. Now shaltow understande what is bihovely and necessarie to verray parfit Penitence. And this stant on three thinges; Contricioun of herte, Confessioun of Mouth, and Satisfaccioun. For which seith Seint Iohn Crisostom: 'Penitence destreyneth a man to accepte benignely every peyne that him is enioyned, with contricion of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaccion; and in werkinge of alle maner humilitee.' And this is fruitful Penitence agayn three thinges in whiche we wratthe oure lord Iesu Crist: this is to seyn, by delyt in thinkinge, by recchelesnesse in spekinge, and by wikked sinful werkinge. And agayns thise wikkede giltes is Penitence, that may be lykned un-to a tree.

§6. The rote of this tree is Contricion, that hydeth him in the herte of him that is verray repentant, right as the rote of a tree hydeth him in the erthe. Of the rote of Contricion springeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leves of Confession, and fruit of Satisfaccion. For which Crist seith in his gospel: 'dooth digne fruit of Penitence'; for by this fruit may men knowe this tree, and nat by the rote that is hid in the herte of man, ne by the braunches ne by the leves of Confession. And therefore oure Lord Iesu Crist seith thus: 'by the fruit of hem ye shul knowen hem.' Of this rote eek springeth a seed of grace, the which seed is moder of sikernes, and this seed is egre and hoot. The grace of this seed springeth of god, thurgh remembrance of the day of dome and on the peynes of helle. Of this matere seith Salomon, that 'in the drede of god man forleteth his sinne.' The hete of this seed is the love of god, and the desiring of the Ioye perdurable. This hete draweth the herte of a man to god, and dooth him haten his sinne. For soothly, ther is no-thing that savoureth so wel to a child as the milk of his norice, ne no-thing is to him more abhominable than thilke milk whan it is medled with other mete. Right so the sinful man that loveth his sinne, him semeth that it is to him most swete of any-thing; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly our lord Iesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nis to him no-thing more abhominable. For soothly, the lawe of god is the love of god; for which David the prophete seith: 'I have loved thy lawe and hated wikkednesse and hate'; he that loveth god kepeth his lawe and his word. This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit, up-on the avision of the king Nabugodonosor, whan he conseiled him to do penitence. Penaunce is the tree of lyf to hem that it receiven, and he that holdeth him in verray penitence is blessed; after the sentence of Salomon.

§7. In this Penitence or Contricion man shal understonde foure thinges, that is to seyn, what is Contricion: and whiche been the causes that moeven a man to Contricion: and how he sholde be contrit: and what Contricion availleth to the soule. Thanne is it thus: that Contricion is the verray sorwe that a man receiveth in his herte for his sinnes, with sad purpos to shryve him, and to do penaunce, and nevermore to do sinne. And this sorwe shal been in this manere, as seith seint Bernard: 'it shal been hevy and grevous, and ful sharpe and poinant in herte.' First, for man hath agilt his lord and his creatour; and more sharpe and poinant, for he hath agilt his fader celestial; and yet more sharpe and poinant, for he hath wrathed and agilt him that boghte him; which with his precious blood hath delivered us fro the bondes of sinne, and fro the crueltee of the devel and fro the peynes of helle.

§8. The causes that oghte moeve a man to Contricion been six. First, a man shal remembre him of hise sinnes; but loke he that thilke remembrance ne be to him no delyt by no wey, but greet shame and sorwe for his gilt. For Iob seith: 'sinful men doon werkes worthy of Confession.' And therefore seith

Ezechie: 'I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf, in bitternesse of myn herte.' And god seith in the Apocalips: remembreth yow fro whennes that ye been falle'; for biforn that tyme that ye sinned, ye were the children of god, and limes of the regne of god; but for your sinne ye been woxen thral and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of aungels, sclaundre of holy chirche, and fode of the false serpent; perpetuel matere of the fyr of helle. And yet more foul and abhominable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme, as doth the hound that retourneth to eten his spewing. And yet be ye fouler for your longe continuing in sinne and your sinful usage, for which ye be roten in your sinne, as a beest in his dong. Swiche manere of thoghtes maken a man to have shame of his sinne, and no delyt, as god seith by the prophete Ezechiel: 'ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes, and they shuln displese yow.' Sothly, sinnes been the weyes that leden folk to helle.

§9. The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdeyn of sinne is this: that, as seith seint Peter, 'who-so that doth sinne is thral of sinne'; and sinne put a man in greet thraldom. And therfore seith the prophete Ezechiel: 'I wente sorweful in desdayn of my-self.' And certes, wel oghte a man have desdayn of sinne, and withdrawe him from that thraldom and vileinye. And lo, what seith Seneca in this matere. He seith thus: 'though I wiste that neither god ne man ne sholde nevere knowe it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to do sinne.' And the same Seneca also seith: 'I am born to gretter thinges than to be thral to my body, or than for to maken of my body a thral.' Ne a fouler thral may no man ne womman maken of his body, than for to yeven his body to sinne. Al were it the fouleste cherl, or the fouleste womman that liveth, and leest of value, yet is he thanne more foule and more in servitude. Evere fro the hyer degree that man falleth, the more is he thral, and more to god and to the world vile and abhominable. O gode god, wel oghte man have desdayn of sinne; sith that, thurgh sinne, ther he was free, now is he maked bonde. And therfore seyth Seint Augustin: 'if thou hast desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte or sinne, have thou thanne desdayn that thou thy-self sholdest do sinne.' Take reward of thy value, that thou ne be to foul to thy-self. Allas! wel oghten they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to sinne, and sore been ashamed of hem-self, that god of his endelees goodnesse hath set hem in heigh estaat, or yeven hem wit, strengthe of body, hele, beautee, prosperitee, and boghte hem fro the deeth with his herte blood, that they so unkindely, agayns his gentilesse, quytten him so vileinsly, to slaughtre of hir owene soules. O gode god, ye wommen that been of so greet beautee, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, that seith: 'he lyketh a fair womman, that is a fool of hir body, lyk to a ring of gold that were in the groyn of a sowe.' For right as a sowe wroteth in everich ordure, so wroteth she hir beautee in the stinkinge ordure of sinne.

§10. The thridde cause that oghte move a man to Contricion, is drede of the day of dome, and of the horrible peynes of helle. For as seint Ierome seith: 'at every tyme that me remembreth of the day of dome, I quake; for whan I ete or drinke, or what-so that I do, evere semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn ere: riseth up, ye that been dede, and cometh to the Iugement.' O gode god, muchel oghte a man to drede swich a Iugement, 'ther-as we shullen been alle,' as seint Poul seith, 'biforn the sete of oure lord Iesu Crist'; wher-as he shal make a general congregacion, wher-as no man may been absent. For certes, there availleth noon essoyne ne excusacion. And nat only that oure defaultes shullen be iuged, but eek that alle oure werkes shullen openly be knowe. And as seith Seint Bernard: 'ther ne shal no pleding availle, ne no sleight; we shullen yeven rekeninge of everich ydel word.' Ther shul we han a Iuge that may nat been deceived ne corrupt. And why? For, certes, alle our thoghtes been discovered as to him; ne for preyere ne for mede he shal nat been corrupt. And therfore seith Salomon: 'the wratthe of god ne wol nat spare no wight, for preyere ne for yifte'; and therfore, at the day of doom, ther nis noon hope to escape. Wherefore, as seith Seint Anselm: 'ful greet angwissh shul the sinful folk have at that tyme; ther shal the sterne and wrothe Iuge sitte above, and under him the horrible put of helle open to destroyen him that moot biknowen hise sinnes, whiche sinnes openly been shewed biforn god and biforn every creature. And on the left syde, mo develes than herte may bithinke, for to harie and drawe the sinful soules to the pyne of helle. And with-inne the hertes of folk shal be the bytinge conscience, and with-oute-forth shal be the world al brenninge. Whider shal thanne the wrecched sinful man flee to hyden him? Certes, he may nat hyden him; he moste come forth and shewen him.' For certes, as seith seint Ierome: 'the erthe shal casten him out of him, and the see also; and the eyr also, that shal be ful of thonder-clappes and lightnings.' Now sothly, who-so wel remembreth him of thise thinges, I gesse that his sinne shal nat turne him in-to delyt, but to greet sorwe, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therfore seith Iob to god: 'suffre, lord, that I may a whyle biwaille and wepe, er I go with-oute returning to the derke lond, covered with the derknesse

of deeth; to the lond of misese and of derknesse, where-as is the shadwe of deeth; where-as ther is noon ordre or ordinance, but grisly drede that evere shal laste.' Lo, here may ye seen that Iob preyde respyt a whyle, to biwepe and waille his trespas; for soothly oon day of respyt is bettre than al the tresor of the world. And for-as-muche as a man may acquiten him-self biforn god by penitence in this world, and nat by tresor, therfore sholde he preyde to god to yeve him respyt a whyle, to biwepe and biwailen his trespas. For certes, al the sorwe that a man mighte make fro the beginning of the world, nis but a litel thing at regard of the sorwe of helle. The cause why that Iob clepeth helle 'the lond of derknesse'; under-stondeth that he clepeth it 'londe' or erthe, for it is stable, and nevere shal faille; 'derk,' for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material. For certes, the derke light, that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne, shal turne him al to peyne that is in helle; for it sheweth him to the horrible develes that him tormenten. 'Covered with the derknesse of deeth': that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of god; for certes, the sighte of god is the lyf perdurable. 'The derknesse of deeth' been the sinnes that the wrecched man hath doon, whiche that destourben him to see the face of god; right as doth a derk cloude bitwixe us and the sonne. 'Lond of misese': by-cause that ther been three maneres of defautes, agayn three thinges that folk of this world han in this present lyf, that is to seyn, honours, delyces, and riches. Agayns honour, have they in helle shame and confusion. For wel ye woot that men clepen 'honour' the reverence that man doth to man; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence. For certes, na-more reverence shal be doon there to a king than to a knave. For which god seith by the prophete Jeremye: 'thilke folk that me despysen shul been in despyt.' 'Honour' is eek cleped greet lordshipe; ther shal no man serven other but of harm and torment. 'Honour' is eek cleped greet dignitee and heighnesse; but in helle shul they been al fortroden of develes. And god seith: 'the horrible develes shulle goon and comen up-on the hevedes of the dampned folk.' And this is for-as-muche as, the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the more shulle they been abated and defouled in helle. Agayns the riches of this world, shul they han misese of poverté; and this poverté shal been in foure thinges: in defaute of tresor, of which that David seith; 'the riche folk, that embraceden and oneden al hir herte to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepinge of deeth; and no-thing ne shul they finden in hir handes of al hir tresor.' And more-over, the miseise of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke. For god seith thus by Moyses; 'they shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hir drinke, and the venim of the dragon hir morsels.' And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of clothing; for they shulle be naked in body as of clothing, save the fyr in which they brenne and othere filthes; and naked shul they been of soule, of alle manere vertues, which that is the clothing of the soule. Where been thanne the gaye robes and the softe shetes and the smale shertes? Lo, what seith god of hem by the prophete Isaye: 'that under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hir covertures shulle been of wormes of helle.' And forther-over, hir miseise shal been in defaute of freendes; for he nis nat povre that hath goode freendes, but there is no freend; for neither god ne no creature shal been freend to hem, and everich of hem shal haten other with deedly hate. 'The sones and the doghtren shullen rebellen agayns fader and mooder, and kinrede agayns kinrede, and chyden and despysen everich of hem other,' bothe day and night, as god seith by the prophete Michias. And the lovinge children, that whylom loveden so fleshly everich other, wolden everich of hem eten other if they mighte. For how sholden they love hem togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem other in the prosperitee of this lyf? For truste wel, hir fleshly love was deedly hate; as seith the prophete David: 'who-so that loveth wikkednesse he hateth his soule.' And who-so hateth his owene soule, certes, he may love noon other wight in no manere. And therefore, in helle is no solas ne no frendshipe, but evere the more fleshly kinredes that been in helle, the more cursinges, the more chydinges, and the more deedly hate ther is among hem. And forther-over, they shul have defaute of alle manere delyces; for certes, delyces been after the appetytes of the fyve wittes, as sighte, heringe, smellinge, savoringe, and touchinge. But in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therfore ful of teres; and hir heringe, ful of waymentinge and of grintage of teeth, as seith Iesu Crist; hir nosethirles shullen be ful of stinkinge stink. And as seith Isaye the prophete: 'hir savoring shal be ful of bitter galle.' And touchinge of al hir body, y-covered with 'fyr that nevere shal quenche, and with wormes that nevere shul dyen,' as god seith by the mouth of Isaye. And for-as-muche as they shul nat wene that they may dyen for peyne, and by hir deeth flee fro peyne, that may they understonden by the word of Iob, that seith: 'ther-as is the shadwe of deeth.' Certes, a shadwe hath the lyknesse of the thing of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thing of which it is shadwe. Right so fareth

the peyne of helle; it is lyk deeth for the horrible anguiss, and why? For it peyneth hem evere, as though they sholde dye anon; but certes they shal nat dye. For as seith Seint Gregorie: 'to wrecche caytives shal be deeth with-oute deeth, and ende with-uten ende, and defaute with-oute failinge. For hir deeth shal alwey liven, and hir ende shal everemo biginne, and hir defaute shal nat faille.' And therfore seith Seint Iohn the Evangelist: 'they shullen folwe deeth, and they shul nat finde him; and they shul desyren to dye, and deeth shal flee fro hem.' And eek Iob seith: that 'in helle is noon ordre of rule.' And al-be-it so that god hath creat alle thinges in right ordre, and no-thing with-uten ordre, but alle thinges been ordeyned and nombred; yet nathelees they that been dampned been no-thing in ordre, ne holden noon ordre. For the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruit. For, as the prophete David seith: 'god shal destrouie the fruit of the erthe as fro hem;' ne water ne shal yeve hem no moisture; ne the eyr no refressing, ne fyr no light. For as seith seint Basile: 'the brenninge of the fyr of this world shal god yeven in helle to hem that been dampned; but the light and the cleerneshe shal be yeven in hevene to hise children'; right as the gode man yeveth flesh to hise children, and bones to his houndes. And for they shullen have noon hope to escape, seith seint Iob atte laste: that 'ther shal horroure and grisly drede dwellen with-uten ende.' Horroure is alwey drede of harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the hertes of hem that been dampned. And therefore han they lorn al hir hope, for sevene causes. First, for god that is hir Iuge shal be with-uten mercy to hem; ne they may nat plesse him, ne noon of hise halwes; ne they ne may yeve no-thing for hir raunson; ne they have no vois to speke to him; ne they may nat flee fro peyne; ne they have no goodnesse in hem, that they mowe shewe to deliver hem fro peyne. And therfore seith Salomon: 'the wikked man dyeth; and whan he is deed, he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne.' Who-so thanne wolde wel understande these peynes, and bithinke him weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his sinnes, certes, he sholde have more talent to syken and to wepe than for to singen and to pleye. For as that seith Salomon: 'who-so that hadde the science to knowe the peynes that been establissed and ordeyned for sinne, he wolde make sorwe.' 'Thilke science,' as seith seint Augustin, 'maketh a man to waymenten in his herte.'

§11. The fourthe point, that oghte maken a man to have contricion, is the sorweful remembrance of the good that he hath left to doon here in erthe; and eek the good that he hath lorn. Soothly, the gode werkes that he hath left, outhen they been the gode werkes that he wroghte er he fel in-to deedly sinne, or elles the gode werkes that he wroghte while he lay in sinne. Soothly, the gode werkes, that he dide biforn that he fil in sinne, been al mortified and astoned and dulled by the ofte sinning. The othere gode werkes, that he wroghte whyl he lay in deedly sinne, they been outrelly dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevene. Thanne thilke gode werkes that been mortified by ofte sinning, whiche gode werkes he dide whyl he was in charitee, ne mowe nevere quiken agayn with-uten verray penitence. And ther-of seith god, by the mouth of Ezechiel: that, 'if the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he live?' Nay; for alle the gode werkes that he hath wroght ne shul nevere been in remembrance; for he shal dyen in his sinne. And up-on thilke chapitre seith seint Gregorie thus: 'that we shulle understonde this principally; that whan we doon deedly sinne, it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawn in-to memorie the gode werkes that we han wroght biforn.' For certes, in the werkinge of the deedly sinne, ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon biforn; that is to seyn, as for to have therby the lyf perdurable in hevene. But nathelees, the gode werkes quiken agayn, and comen agayn, and helpen, and availlen to have the lyf perdurable in hevene, whan we han contricion. But soothly, the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly sinne, for-as-muche as they were doon in deedly sinne, they may nevere quiken agayn. For certes, thing that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quikene; and nathelees, al-be-it that they ne availle noght to han the lyf perdurable, yet availlen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles to geten temporal richesse, or elles that god wole the rather enlumine and lightne the herte of the sinful man to have repentance; and eek they availlen for to usen a man to doon gode werkes, that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteis lord Iesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost; for in somewhat it shal availle. But for-as-muche as the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in good lyf, been al mortified by sinne folwinge; and eek, sith that alle the gode werkes that men doon whyl they been in deedly synne, been outrelly dede as for to have the lyf perdurable; wel may that man, that no good werke ne dooth, singe thilke newe Frenshe song: "*lay tout perdu mon temps et mon labour*." For certes, sinne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace. For soothly, the grace of the holy goost fareth lyk fyr, that may nat been ydel; for fyr faileth anoon as it forleteth his wirkinge, and right so grace fayleth anoon as it forleteth his werkinge. Than leseth the sinful man the goodnesse of glorie, that only is

bihight to gode men that labouren and werken. Wel may he be sory thanne, that oweth al his lif to god as longe as he hath lived, and eek as longe as he shal live, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to god, to whom he oweth al his lyf. For trust wel, 'he shal yeven accounts,' as seith seint Bernard, 'of alle the godes that han be yeven him in this present lyf, and how he hath hem despended; in so muche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal yeve of it a rekening.'

§12. The fifte thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is remembrance of the passion that oure lord Iesu Crist suffred for our sinnes. For, as seith seint Bernard: 'why! that I live, I shal have remembrance of the travailles that oure lord Crist suffred in preching; his werinesse in travailling, hise temptacions whan he fasted, hise longe wakings whan he preyde, hise teres whan that he weep for pitee of good peple; the wo and the shame and the filthe that men seyden to him; of the foule spitting that men spitte in his face, of the buffettes that men yaven him, of the foule mowes, and of the repreves that men to him seyden; of the nayles with whiche he was nailed to the croys, and of al the remenant of his passion that he suffred for my sinnes, and no-thing for his gilt.' And ye shul understonde, that in mannes sinne is every manere of ordre or ordinance turned up-so-doun. For it is sooth, that god, and reson, and sensualitee, and the body of man been so ordeyned, that everich of thise foure thinges sholde have lordshipe over that other; as thus: god sholde have lordshipe over reson, and reson over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man. But sothly, whan man sinneth, al this ordre or ordinance is turned up-so-doun. And therfore thanne, for-as-muche as the reson of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant to god, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. And why? For sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns reson; and by that wey leseth reson the lordshipe over sensualitee and over the body. For right as reson is rebel to god, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to reson and the body also. And certes, this disordinaunce and this rebellion oure lord Iesu Crist aboghte up-on his precious body ful dere, and herketh in which wyse. For-as-muche thanne as reson is rebel to god, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe and to be deed. This suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitraysed of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, 'so that his blood brast out at every nail of hise handes,' as seith seint Augustin. And forther-over, for-as-muchel as reson of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have shame; and this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man, whan they spetten in his visage. And forther-over, for-as-muchel thanne as the caitif body of man is rebel bothe to reson and to sensualitee, therfore is it worthy the deeth. And this suffred oure lord Iesu Crist for man up-on the croys, where-as ther was no part of his body free, withouten greet payne and bitter passion. And al this suffred Iesu Crist, that nevere forfeted. And therfore resonably may be seyde of Iesu in this manere: 'to muchel am I peyned for the thinges that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shend-shipe that man is worthy to have.' And therfore may the sinful man wel seye, as seith seint Bernard: 'acursed be the bitterness of my sinne, for which ther moste be suffred so muchel bitterness.' For certes, after the diverse discordances of oure wikkednesses, was the passion of Iesu Crist ordeyned in diverse thinges, as thus. Certes, sinful mannes soule is bitraysed of the devel by coveitise of temporel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth fleshly delycles; and yet is it tormented by incapience of adversitee, and bispet by servage and subieccion of sinne; and atte laste it is slayn fynally. For this disordinaunce of sinful man was Iesu Crist first bitraysed, and after that was he bounde, that cam for to unbynden us of sinne and payne. Thanne was he biscorned, that only sholde han been honoured in alle thinges and of alle thinges. Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al man-kinde, in which visage aungels desyren to looke, vileynsly bispet. Thanne was he scourged that no-thing hadde agilt; and fynally, thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was acomplished the word of Isaye: 'he was wounded for oure misdeds, and defouled for oure felonies.' Now sith that Iesu Crist took up-on him-self the payne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte sinful man wepen and biwayle, that for hise sinnes goddes sone of hevene sholde al this payne endure.

§13. The sixte thing that oghte moeve a man to contricion, is the hope of thre thynges; that is to seyn, foryifnesse of sinne, and the yifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevene, with which god shal guerdone a man for hise gode dedes. And for-as-muche as Iesu Crist yeveth us thise yiftes of his largesse and of his sovereyn bountee, therfore is he cleped *Iesus Nazarenus rex Judeorum*. Iesus is to seyn 'saveour' or 'salvacion,' on whom men shul hope to have foryifnesse of sinnes, which that is proprely salvacion of sinnes. And therfore seyde the aungel to Ioseph: 'thou shal clepen his name Iesus, that shal saven his peple of hir sinnes.' And heer-of seith seint Peter: 'ther is noon other name

under hevene that is yeve to any man, by which a man may be saved, but only Iesus.' *Nazarenus* is as muche for to seye as 'florisslinge,' in which a man shal hope, that he that yeveth him remission of sinnes shal yeve him eek grace wel for to do. For in the flour is hope of fruit in tyme cominge; and in foryifnesse of sinnes hope of grace wel for to do. 'I was atte dore of thyn herte,' seith Iesus, 'and cleped for to entre; he that openeth to me shal have foryifnesse of sinne. I wol entre in-to him by my grace, and soupe with him,' by the goode werkes that he shal doon; whiche werkes been the foode of god; 'and he shal soupe with me,' by the grete loye that I shal yeven him. Thus shal man hope, for hise werkes of penaunce, that god shall yeven him his regne; as he bihoteth him in the gospel.

§14. Now shal a man understonde, in which manere shal been his contricion. I seye, that it shal been universal and total; this is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentant for alle hise sinnes that he hath doon in delyt of his thought; for delyt is ful perilous. For ther been two manere of consentinges; that oon of hem is cleped consentinge of affeccion, when a man is moeved to do sinne, and delyteth him longe for to thinke on that sinne; and his reson aperceyveth it wel, that it is sinne agayns the lawe of god, and yet his reson refreyneth nat his foul delyt or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayns the reverence of god; al-though his reson ne consente noght to doon that sinne in dede, yet seyn somme doctours that swich delyt that dwelleth longe, it is ful perilous, al be it nevere so lite. And also a man sholde sorwe, namely, for al that evere he hath desired agayn the lawe of god with perfit consentinge of his reson; for ther-of is no doute, that it is deedly sinne in consentinge. For certes, ther is no deedly sinne, that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delyt; and so forth in-to consentinge and in-to dede. Wherefore I seye, that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delytes, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but only of the dede of grete sinnes outward. Wherefore I seye, that swiche wikked delytes and wikked thoghtes been subtil bigyleres of hem that shullen be dampned. More-over, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes as wel as for hise wikkede dedes; for certes, the repentance of a singuler sinne, and nat repente of alle hise othere sinnes, or elles repenten him of alle hise othere sinnes, and nat of a singuler sinne, may nat availle. For certes, god almighty is al good; and ther-fore he foryeveth al, or elles right noght. And heer-of seith seint Augustin: 'I woot certainly that god is enemy to everich sinnere'; and how thanne? He that observeth o sinne, shal he have foryifnesse of the remenaunt of hise othere sinnes? Nay. And forther-over, contricion sholde be wonder sorweful and anguissous, and therfore yeveth him god pleynty his mercy; and therfore, whan my soule was anguissous with-inne me, I hadde remembrance of god that my preyere mighte come to him. Forther-over, contricion moste be continuel, and that man have stedefast purpos to shryven him, and for to amenden him of his lyf. For soothly, whyl contricion lasteth, man may evere have hope of foryifnesse; and of this comth hate of sinne, that destroyeth sinne bothe in himself, and eek in other folk, at his power. For which seith David: 'ye that loven god hateth wikkednesse.' For trusteth wel, to love god is for to love that he loveth, and hate that he hateth.

§15. The laste thing that man shal understonde in contricion is this; wher-of awayleth contricion. I seye, that som tyme contricion delivereth a man fro sinne; of which that David seith: 'I seye,' quod David, that is to seyn, 'I purposed fermely to shryve me; and thow, Lord, reledest my sinne.' And right so as contricion availleth noght, with-uten sad purpos of shrifte, if man have oportunittee, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfaccion with-uten contricion. And more-over, contricion destroyeth the prison of helle, and maketh wayk and feble alle the strengthes of the develes, and restoreth the yiftes of the holy goost and of alle gode vertues; and it clenseth the soule of sinne, and delivereth the soule fro the payne of helle, and fro the companye of the devel, and fro the servage of sinne, and restoreth it to alle godes espiituels, and to the companye and communion of holy chirche. And forther-over, it maketh him that whylom was sone of ire to be sone of grace; and alle thise thinges been preved by holy writ. And therfore, he that wolde sette his entente to thise thinges, he were ful wys; for soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to sinne, but yeven his body and al his herte to the service of Iesu Crist, and ther-of doon him hommage. For soothly, oure swete lord Iesu Crist hath spared us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of mannes soule, a sory song we mighten alle singe.

Explicit prima pars Penitentie; et sequitur secunda pars eiusdem.

§16. The seconde partie of Penitence is Confession, that is signe of contricion. Now shul ye understonde what is Confession, and whether it oghte nedes be doon or noon, and whiche thinges been covenable to verray Confession.

§17. First shaltow understonde that Confession is verray shewing of sinnes to the preest; this is to seyn 'verray,' for he moste confessen him of alle the condiciouns that bilongen to his sinne, as ferforth

as he can. Al moot be seyde, and no thing excused ne hid ne forwrapped, and noght avaunte him of his gode werkes. And forther over, it is necessarie to understonde whennes that sinnes springen, and how they encresen, and whiche they been.

§18. Of the springinge of sinnes seith seint Paul in this wise: that 'right as by a man sinne entred first in-to this world, and thurgh that sinne deeth, right so thilke deeth entred in-to alle men that sinneden.' And this man was Adam, by whom sinne entred in-to this world whan he brak the comaundement of god. And therefore, he that first was so mighty that he sholde not have dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste nedes dye, whether he wolde or noon; and all his progenie in this world that in thilke man sinneden. Loke that in thestaat of innocence, when Adam and Eve naked weren in paradys, and nothing ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was most wyly of alle othere bestes that god hadde made, seyde to the womman: 'why comaunded god to yow, ye sholde nat eten of every tree in paradys?' The womman answerde: 'of the fruit,' quod she, 'of the trees in paradys we feden us; but soothly, of the fruit of the tree that is in the middel of paradys, god forbad us for to ete, ne nat touchen it, lest per-aventure we should dyen.' The serpent seyde to the womman: 'nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth; for sothe, god woot, that what day that ye eten ther-of, youre eyen shul opene, and ye shul been as goddes, knowinge good and harm.' The womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feding, and fair to the eyen, and delytable to the sighte; she tok of the fruit of the tree, and eet it, and yaf to hir housbonde, and he eet; and anon the eyen of hem bothe opened. And whan that they knewe that they were naked, they sowed of fige-leves a manere of breches to hiden hir membres. There may ye seen that deedly sinne hath first suggestion of the feend, as sheweth here by the naddre; and afterward, the delyt of the flesh, as sheweth here by Eve; and after that, the consenting of resoun, as sheweth here by Adam. For trust wel, thogh so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flesh, and the flesh hadde delyt in the beautee of the fruit defended, yet certes, til that resoun, that is to seyn, Adam, consented to the etinge of the fruit, yet stood he in thestaat of innocence. Of thilke Adam toke we thilke sinne original; for of him fleshly descended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt matere. And whan the soule is put in our body, right anon is contract original sinne; and that, that was erst but only peyne of concupiscence, is afterward bothe peyne and sinne. And therefore be we alle born sones of wratthe and of dampnacion perdurable, if it nere baptesme that we receyven, which binimeth us the culpe; but for sothe, the peyne dwelleth with us, as to temptacion, which peyne highte concupiscence. Whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man, it maketh him coveite, by coveitise of flesh, fleshly sinne, by sighte of hise eyen as to erthely thinges. and coveitise of hynesse by pryde of herte.

§19. Now as for to speken of the firste coveitise, that is, concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres, that weren lawe-fulliche y-made and by rightful Iugement of god; I seye, for-as-muche as man is nat obeisaunt to god, that is his lord, therefore is the flesh to him disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norissinge of sinne and occasion of sinne. Therefore, al the whyle that a man hath in him the peyne of concupiscence, it is impossible but he be tempted somtyme, and moeved in his flesh to sinne. And this thing may nat faille as longe as he liveth; it may wel wexe feble and faille, by vertu of baptesme and by the grace of god thurgh penitence; but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal som tyme be moeved in him-self, but-if he were al refreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie or colde drinkes. For lo, what seith seint Paul: 'the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flesh; they been so contrarie and so stryven, that a man may nat alwey doon as he wolde.' The same seint Paul, after his grete penaunce in water and in lond (in water by night and by day, in greet peril and in greet peyne, in lond, in famine, in thirst, in cold and clothlees, and ones stoned almost to the deeth) yet seyde he: 'allas! I, caytif man, who shal deliver me fro the prisoun of my caytif body?' And seint Ierome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, where-as he hadde no companye but of wilde bestes, where-as he ne hadde no mete but herbes and water to his drinke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flesh was blak as an Ethiopen for hete and ny destroyed for cold, yet seyde he: that 'the brenninge of lecherie boiled in al his body.' Wherefore I woot wel sikerly, that they been deceyved that seyn, that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. Witnesse on Seint Iame the Apostel, that seith: that 'every wight is tempted in his owen concupiscence': that is to seyn, that everich of us hath matere and occasion to be tempted of the norissinge of sinne that is in his body. And therefore seith Seint Iohn the Evaungelist: 'if that we seyn that we beth with-out sinne, we deceyve us-selve, and trouthe is nat in us.'

§20. Now shal ye understonde in what manere that sinne wexeth or encreseth in man. The firste thing

is thilke norissinge of sinne, of which I spak biforn, thilke fleshly concupiscence. And after that comth the subieccion of the devel, this is to seyn, the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fyr of fleshly concupiscence. And after that, a man bithinketh him whether he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne, if that a man withstonde and weyve the firste entysinge of his flesh and of the feend, thanne is it no sinne; and if it so be that he do nat so, thanne feleth he anon a flambe of delyt. And thanne is it good to be war, and kepen him wel, or elles he wol falle anon in-to consentinge of sinne; and thanne wol he do it, if he may have tyme and place. And of this matere seith Moyses by the devel in this manere: 'the feend seith, I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestion, and I wole hente him by moevynge or stiringe of sinne. I wol departe my pryse or my praye by deliberacion, and my lust shal been accompliced in delyt; I wol drawe my swerd in consentinge;' for certes, right as a swerd departeth a thing in two peces, right so consentinge departeth god fro man: 'and thanne wol I sleen him with myn hand in dede of sinne'; thus seith the feend. For certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is sinne accompliced by temptacion, by delyt, and by consentinge; and thanne is the sin cleped actual.

§21. For sothe, sinne is in two maneres; outhur it is venial, or deedly sinne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature more than Iesu Crist oure creatour, thanne is it deedly sinne. And venial synne is it, if man love Iesu Crist lasse than him oghte. For sothe, the dede of this venial sinne is ful perilous; for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to god more and more. And therfore, if a man charge him-self with manye swiche venial sinnes, certes, but-if so be that he som tyme discharge him of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amenuse in him al the love that he hath to Iesu Crist; and in this wise skippeth venial in-to deedly sinne. For certes, the more that a man chargeth his soule with venial sinnes, the more is he enclyned to fallen in-to deedly sinne. And therfore, lat us nat be negligent to deschargen us of venial sinnes. For the proverbe seith: that manye smale maken a greet. And herkne this ensample. A greet wave of the see comth som-tyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the ship. And the same harm doth som-tyme the smale dropes of water, that entren thurgh a litel crevace in-to the thurrok, and in-to the botme of the ship, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. And therfore, al-thogh ther be a difference bitwixe thise two causes of drenchinge, algates the ship is dreynt. Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly sinne, and of anoyouse veniale sinnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly, that thilke worldly thinges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he sinneth venially, is as greet in his herte as the love of god, or more. And therfore, the love of every thing, that is nat biset in god ne doon principally for goddes sake, al-though that a man love it lasse than god, yet is it venial sinne; and deedly sinne, whan the love of any thing weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of god, or more. 'Deedly sinne,' as seith seint Augustin, 'is, whan a man turneth his herte fro god, which that is verray sovereyn bountee, that may nat chaunge, and yeveth his herte to thing that may chaunge and flitte'; and certes, that is every thing, save god of hevene. For sooth is, that if a man yeve his love, the which that he oweth al to god with al his herte, un-to a creature, certes, as muche of his love as he yeveth to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro god; and therfore doth he sinne. For he, that is dettour to god, ne yeldeth nat to god al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte.

§22. Now sith man understondeth generally, which is venial sinne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of sinnes whiche that many a man per-aventure ne demeth hem nat sinnes, and ne shryveth him nat of the same thinges; and yet nathelees they been sinnes. Soothly, as thise clerkes wryten, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drinketh more than suffyseth to the sustenance of his body, in certain he dooth sinne. And eek whan he speketh more than nedeth, it is sinne. Eke whan he herkneth nat benignely the compleint of the povre. Eke whan he is in hele of body and wol nat faste, whan othere folk faste, withouten cause resonable. Eke whan he slepeth more than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite. Eke whan he useth his wyf, withouten sovereyn desyr of engendrure, to the honour of god, or for the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body. Eke whan he wol nat visite the sike and the prisoner, if he may. Eke if he love wyf or child, or other worldly thing, more than resoun requyeth. Eke if he flaterre or blandishe more than him oghte for any necessitee. Eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the povre. Eke if he apparailleth his mete more deliciously than nede is, or ete it to hastily by likerousnesse. Eke if he tale vanitees at chirche or at goddes service, or that he be a talker ot ydel wordes of folye or of vileinye; for he shal yelden acountes of it at the day of dome. Eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do thinges that he may nat perfourne. Eke whan that he, by lightnesse or folie, misseyeth or scorneth his

neighebore. Eke whan he hath any wikked suspencion of thing, ther he ne woot of it no soothfastnesse. Thise thinges and mo with-oute nombre been sinnes, as seith seint Augustin.

Now shal men understonde, that al-be-it so that noon erthely man may eschue alle venial sinnes, yet may he refreyne him by the brenninge love that he hath to oure lord Iesu Crist, and by preyeres and confession and othere gode werkes, so that it shal but litel greve. For, as seith seint Augustin: 'if a man love god in swiche manere, that al that evere he doth is in the love of god, and for the love of god verrailly, for he brenneth in the love of god: loke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anoyeth or greveth, so muche anoyeth a venial sinne un-to a man that is parfit in the love of Iesu Crist.' Men may also refreyne venial sinne by receyvinge worthily of the precious body of Iesu Crist; by receyvinge eek of holy water; by almesdede; by general confession of *Confiteor* at masse and at complin; and by blessinge of bisshopes and of preestes, and by othere gode werkes.

Explicit secunda pars Penitentie.

Sequitur de Septem Peccatis Mortalibus et eorum dependenciis circumstanciis et speciebus.

§23. Now is it bihovely thing to telle whiche been the deedly sinnes, this is to seyn, chieftaines of sinnes; alle they renne in o lees, but in diverse maneres. Now been they cleped chieftaines for-as-muche as they been chief, and springers of alle othere sinnes. Of the roote of thise sevene sinnes thanne is Pryde, the general rote of alle harmes; for of this rote springen certein braunches, as Ire, Envy, Accidie or Slewthe, Avarice or Coveitise (to commune understandinge), Glotony, and Lecherye. And everich of thise chief sinnes hath hise braunches and hise twiggis, as shal be declared in hir chapitres folwinge.

De Superbia.

§24. And thogh so be that no man can outrelly telle the nombre of the twiggis and of the harmes that cometh of Pryde, yet wol I shewe a partie of hem, as ye shul understonde. Ther is Inobedience, Avauntinge, Ipocrisie, Despyt, Arrogance, Impudence, Swellinge of herte, Insolence, Elacion, Impacience, Strif, Contumacie, Presumpcion, Irreverence, Pertinacie, Veyne Glorie; and many another twig that I can nat declare. Inobedient, is he that disobeyeth for despyt to the comandements of god and to hise sovereyns, and to his goostly fader. Avauntour, is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon. Ipocrite, is he that hydeth to shewe him swiche as he is, and sheweth him swiche as he noght is. Despitous, is he that hath desdeyn of his neighebore, that is to seyn, of his evene-cristene, or hath despyt to doon that him oghte to do. Arrogant, is he that thinketh that he hath thilke bountees in him that he hath noght, or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise desertes; or elles he demeth that he be that he nis nat. Impudent, is he that for his pride hath no shame of hise sinnes. Swellinge of herte, is whan a man reioyseth him of harm that he hath doon. Insolent, is he that despyseth in his Iugement alle othere folk as to regard of his value, and of his conning, and of his speking, and of his bering. Elacion, is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe. Impacient, is he that wol nat been y-taught ne undernome of his vyce, and by stryf werreieth trouthe witingly, and deffendeth his folye. *Contumax*, is he that thurgh his indignacion is agayns everich auctoritee or power of hem that been hise sovereyns. Presumpcion, is whan a man undertaketh an emprise that him oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do; and that is called Surquidrie. Irreverence, is whan men do nat honour thereas hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be revered. Pertinacie, is whan man deffendeth his folye, and trusteth to muchel in his owene wit. Veyne glorie, is for to have pompe and delyt in his temporel hynesse, and glorifie him in this worldly estaat. Iangling, is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille, and taken no kepe what they seye.

§25. And yet is ther a privee spece of Pryde, that waiteth first to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth than that other is, per-aventure; and eek he waiteth or desyeth to sitte, or elles to goon above him in the wey, or kisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offring biforn his neighebore, and swiche semblable thinges; agayns his duetee, per-aventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in swich a proud desyr to be magnified and honoured biforn the peple.

§26. Now been ther two maneres of Pryde; that oon of hem is with-inne the herte of man, and that other is with-oute. Of whiche soothly thise forseyde thinges, and mo than I have seyde, apertenen to pryde that is in the herte of man; and that othere spesces of pryde been with-oute. But natheles that oon of thise spesces of pryde is signe of that other, right as the gaye leefsel atte taverne is signe of the wyn that is in the celer. And this is in manye thinges: as in speche and contenance, and in outrageous array of clothing; for certes, if ther ne hadde be no sinne in clothing, Crist wolde nat have noted and spoken of the clothing of thilke riche man in the gospel. And, as seith Seint Gregorie, that precious clothing is coupable for the derthe of it, and for his softenesse, and for his strangenesse and

degysinesse, and for the superfluitee, or for the inordinat scantnesse of it. Allas! may men nat seen, as in oure dayes, the sinful costlewe array of clothinge, and namely in to muche superfluitee, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse?

§27. As to the firste sinne, that is in superfluitee of clothinge, which that maketh it so dere, to harm of the peple; nat only the cost of embroudinge, the degyse endentinge or barringe, oundinge, palinge, windinge, or bendinge, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee; but ther is also costlewe furringe in hir gounes, so muche pounsoninge of chisels to maken holes, so muche dagginge of sheres; forth-with the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gounes, trailinge in the dong and in the myre, on horse and eek on fote, as wel of man as of womman, that al thilke trailing is verrailly as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is yeven to the povre; to greet damage of the forseide povre folk. And that in sondry wyse: this is to seyn, that the more that clooth is wasted, the more it costeth to the peple for the scantnesse; and forther-over, if so be that they wolde yeven swich pounsoned and dagged clothing to the povre folk, it is nat convenient to were for hir estaat, ne suffisant to bete hir necessitee, to kepe hem fro the distemperance of the firmament. Upon that other syde, to speken of the horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothing, as been thise cutted sloppes or hainselins, that thurgh hir shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres of man, to wikked entente. Allas! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shap, and the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lyk the maladie of hirnias, in the wrappinge of hir hoses; and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hindre part of a she-ape in the fulle of the mone. And more-over, the wrecched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh the degysinge, in departinge of hir hoses in whyt and reed, semeth that half hir shameful privee membres weren flayn. And if so be that they departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whyt and blak, or whyt and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth; thanne semeth it, as by variance of colour, that half the partie of hir privee membres were corrupt by the fyr of seint Antony, or by cancre, or by other swich meschaunce. Of the hindre part of hir buttokes, it is ful horrible for to see. For certes, in that partie of hir body ther-as they purgen hir stinkinge ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the peple proudly in despyt of honestetee, the which honestetee that Iesu Crist and hise freendes observede to shewen in hir lyve. Now as of the outrageous array of wommen, god woot, that though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire, yet notifie they in hir array of atyr likerousnesse and pryde. I sey nat that honestetee in clothinge of man or womman is uncovenable, but certes the superfluitee or disordinat scantitee of clothinge is reprevable. Also the sinne of aornement or of apparaille is in thinges that apertenen to rydinge, as in to manye delicat horses that been holden for delyt, that been so faire, fatte, and costlewe; and also to many a vicious knave that is sustened by cause of hem; in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and brydles covered with precious clothing and riche, barres and plates of gold and of silver. For which god seith by Zakarie the prophete, 'I wol confounde the ryderes of swiche horses.' This folk taken litel reward of the rydinge of goddes sone of hevene, and of his harneys whan he rood up-on the asse, and ne hadde noon other harneys but the povre clothes of hise disciples; ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on other beest. I speke this for the sinne of superfluitee, and nat for reasonable honestetee, whan reson it requyreth. And forther, certes pryde is greetly notified in holdinge of greet meinee, whan they be of litel profit or of right no profit. And namely, whan that meinee is felonous and damageous to the peple, by hardinesse of heigh lordshipe or by wey of offices. For certes, swiche lordes sellen thanne hir lordshipe to the devel of helle, whanne they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meinee. Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenen the theftes of hir hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites. Thilke manere of folk been the flyes that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the careyne. Swiche forseide folk stranglen spiritually hir lordshipes; for which thus seith David the prophete, 'wikked deeth mote come up-on thilke lordshipes, and god yeve that they mote descend in-to helle al doun; for in hir houses been iniquitees and shrewednesses,' and nat god of hevene. And certes, but-if they doon amendement, right as god yaf his benison to Laban by the service of Iacob, and to Pharao by the service of Joseph, right so god wol yeve his malison to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servaunts, but-if they come to amendement. Pryde of the table appereth eek ful ofte; for certes, riche men been cleped to festes, and povre folk been put away and rebuked. Also in excesse of diverse metes and drinkes; and namely, swiche manere bake metes and dish-metes, brenninge of wilde fyr, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wast; so that it is abusion for to thinke. And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of minstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the more to delycles of luxurie, if so be that he sette his herte

the lasse up-on oure lord Iesu Crist, certein it is a sinne; and certainly the delycles mighte been so grete in this caas, that man mighte lightly falle by hem in-to deedly sinne. The especes that sourden of pryde, soothly whan they sourden of malice ymagined, avysed, and forncast, or elles of usage, been deedly synnes, it is no doute. And whan they sourden by freletee unavysed sodeinly, and sodeinly withdrawen ayein, al been they grevouse synnes, I gesse that they ne been nat deedly. Now mighte men axe wher-of that Pryde sourdeth and springeth, and I seye: somtyme it springeth of the goodes of nature, and som-tyme of the goodes of fortune, and som-tyme of the goodes of grace. Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outhur in goodes of body or in goodes of soule. Certes, goodes of body been hele of body, as strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrye, franchise. Goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharp understondynge, subtil engin, vertu naturel, good memorie. Goodes of fortune been riches, highe degrees of lordshipes, preisinges of the peple. Goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spirituel travaille, benigntee, vertuous contemplacion, withstandinge of temptacion, and semblable thinges. Of whiche forseyde goodes, certes it is a ful greet folye a man to pryden him in any of hem alle. Now as for to speken of goodes of nature, god woot that som-tyme we han hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit. As, for to speken of hele of body; certes it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte encheson of the siknesse of oure soule; for god woot, the flesh is a ful greet enemy to the soule: and therfore, the more that the body is hool, the more be we in peril to falle. Eke for to pryde him in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye; for certes, the flesh coveiteth agayn the spirit, and ay the more strong that the flesh is, the sorier may the soule be: and, over al this, strengthe of body and worldly hardinesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pryde him of his gentrye is ful greet folye; for ofte tyme the gentrye of the body binimeth the gentrye of the soule; and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o moder; and alle we been of o nature roten and corrupt, both riche and povre. For sothe, o manere gentrye is for to preise, that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees, and maketh him Cristes child. For truste wel, that over what man sinne hath maistrie, he is a verray chelr to sinne.

§28. Now been ther generale signes of gentillesse; as eschewing of vyce and ribaudye and servage of sinne, in word, in werk, and contenance; and usinge vertu, curteisye, and clenness, and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure; for thilke that passeth mesure is folye and sinne. Another is, to remembre him of bountee that he of other folk hath receyved. Another is, to be benigne to hise goode subgetis; wherefore, as seith Senek, 'ther is no-thing more covenable to a man of heigh estaat than debonairetee and pitee. And therfore thise flies that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir king, they chesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith he may stinge.' Another is, a man to have a noble herte and a diligent, to attayne to heighe vertuose thinges. Now certes, a man to pryde him in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folye; for thilke yiftes of grace that sholde have turned him to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth him to venim and to confusion, as seith seint Gregorie. Certes also, who-so prydeth him in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool; for som-tyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caitif and a wrecche er it be night: and somtyme the richesse of a man is cause of his deeth; somtyme the delycles of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. Certes, the commendacion of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste; this day they preyse, tomorwe they blame. God woot, desyr to have commendacion of the peple hath caused deeth to many a bisy man.

Remedium contra peccatum Superbie.

§29. Now sith that so is, that ye han understonde what is pryde, and whiche been the spesces of it, and whennes pride sourdeth and springeth; now shul ye understonde which is the remedie agayns the sinne of pryde, and that is, humilitee or mekenesse. That is a vertu, thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of him-self, and holdeth of him-self no prys ne deyntee as in regard of hise desertes, consideringe evere his freletee. Now been ther three maneres of humilitee; as humilitee in herte, and another humilitee in his mouth; the thridde in hise werkes. The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres: that oon is, whan a man holdeth him-self as noght worth biforn god of hevene. Another is, whan he ne despyseth noon other man. The thridde is, whan he rekketh nat thogh men holde him noght worth. The ferthe is, whan he nis nat sory of his humiliacion. Also, the humilitee of mouth is in foure thinges: in attempree speche, and in humblesse of speche, and whan he biknoweth with his owene mouth that he is swich as him thinketh that he is in his herte. Another is, whan he preiseth the bountee of another man, and nothing ther-of amenuseth. Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres: the firste is, whan he putteth othere men biforn him. The seconde is, to chese the loweste place over-al. The thridde is,

gladly to assente to good conseil. The ferthe is, to stonde gladly to the award of hise sovereyns, or of him that is in hyer degree; certain, this is a greet werk of humiltee.

Sequitur de Inuidia.

§30. After Pryde wol I speken of the foule sinne of Envye, which is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of other mannes prosperitee; and after the word of saint Augustin, it is sorwe of other mannes wele, and Ioye of othere mennes harm. This foule sinne is platly agayns the holy goost. Al-be-it so that every sinne is agayns the holy goost, yet natheless, for as muche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the holy goost, and Envye comth proprely of malice, therfore it is proprely agayn the bountee of the holy goost. Now hath malice two spesces, that is to seyn, hardnesse of herte in wikkednesse, or elles the flesh of man is so blind, that he considereth nat that he is in sinne, or rekketh nat that he is in sinne; which is the hardnesse of the devel. That other spece of malice is, whan a man werreyeth trouthe, whan he woot that it is trouthe. And eek, whan he werreyeth the grace that god hath yeve to his neighebores; and al this is by Envye. Certes, thanne is Envye the worste sinne that is. For soothly, alle othere sinnes been som-tyme only agayns o special vertu; but certes, Envye is agayns alle vertues and agayns alle goodnesses; for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighebores; and in this manere it is divers from alle othere sinnes. For wel unneth is ther any sinne that it ne hath som delyt in itself, save only Envye, that evere hath in itself anguish and sorwe. The spesces of Envye been thise: ther is first, sorwe of other mannes goodnesse and of his prosperitee; and prosperitee is kindly matere of Ioye; thanne is Envye a sinne agayns kinde. The seconde spece of Envye is Ioye of other mannes harm; and that is proprely lyk to the devel, that evere reioyseth him of mannes harm. Of thise two spesces comth bakbyting; and this sinne of bakbyting or detraccion hath certeine spesces, as thus. Som man preiseth his neighebores by a wikke entente; for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende. Alwey he maketh a 'but' atte laste ende, that is digne of more blame, than worth is al the preisinge. The seconde spece is, that if a man be good and dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbyter wol turne all thilke goodnesse up-so-down to his shrewed entente. The thridde is, to amenuse the bountee of his neighebores. The fourthe spece of bakbyting is this; that if men speke goodnesse of a man, thanne wol the bakbyter seyn, 'parfey, swich a man is yet bet than he'; in dispreisinge of him that men preise. The fifte spece is this; for to consente gladly and herkne gladly to the harm that men speke of other folk. This sinne is ful greet, and ay encreseth after the wikked entente of the bakbyter. After bakbyting cometh grucching or murmuracion; and somtyme it springeth of inpatience agayns god, and somtyme agayns man. Agayns god it is, whan a man grucbeth agayn the peynes of helle, or agayns poverté, or los of catel, or agayn reyn or tempest; or elles grucbeth that shrewes han prosperitee, or elles for that goode men han adversitee. And alle thise thinges sholde men suffre patiently, for they comen by the rightful Iugement and ordinance of god. Som-tyme comth grucching of avarice; as Iudas grucched agayns the Magdaleyne, whan she enoynte the heved of oure lord Iesu Crist with hir precious oynement. This maner murmure is swich as whan man grucbeth of goodnesse that him-self dooth, or that other folk doon of hir owene catel. Som-tyme comth murmure of pryde; as whan Simon the Pharisee grucched agayn the Magdaleyne, whan she approached to Iesu Crist, and weep at his feet for hir sinnes. And somtyme grucching sourdeth of Envye; whan men discovereth a mannes harm that was privee, or bereth him on hond thing that is fals. Murmure eek is ofte amonges servants, that grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon leveful thinges; and, for-as-muche as they dar nat openly withseye the comaundements of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche, and murmure prively for verray despyt; whiche wordes men clepen the develes *Pater-noster*, though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere *Pater-noster*, but that lewed folk yeven it swich a name. Som tyme grucching comth of ire or prive hate, that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare. Thanne cometh eek bitterness of herte; thurgh which bitterness every good dede of his neighebor semeth to him bitter and unsavory. Thanne cometh discord, that unbindeth alle manere of frendshipe. Thanne comth scorninge, as whan a man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebor, al do he never so weel. Thanne comth accusinge, as whan man seketh occasion to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lyk to the craft of the devel, that waiteth bothe night and day to accusen us alle. Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh which a man anoyeth his neighebor prively if he may; and if he noght may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous prively, or empoysone or sleen hise bestes, and semblable thinges.

Remedium contra peccatum Inuidie.

§31. Now wol I speke of the remedie agayns this foule sinne of Envye. First, is the love of god principal,

and loving of his neighebor as him-self; for soothly, that oon ne may nat been withoute that other. And truste wel, that in the name of thy neigheboore thou shalt understonde the name of thy brother; for certes alle we have o fader fleshly, and o moder, that is to seyn, Adam and Eve; and eek o fader espirituel, and that is god of hevene. Thy neigheboore artow holden for to love, and wilne him alle goodnesse; and therfore seith god, 'love thy neigheboore as thyselfe,' that is to seyn, to salvacion bothe of lyf and of soule. And more-over, thou shalt love him in word, and in benigne amonestinge, and chastysinge; and conforten him in hise anoyes, and preye for him with al thyn herte. And in dede thou shalt love him in swich wyse, that thou shalt doon to him in charitee as thou woldest that it were doon to thyn owene persone. And therfore, thou ne shalt doon him no damage in wikked word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule, by entysing of wikked ensample. Thou shalt nat desyren his wyf, ne none of hise thinges. Understond eek, that in the name of neighebor is comprehended his enemy. Certes man shal loven his enemy by the comandement of god; and soothly thy frend shaltow love in God. I seye, thyn enemy shaltow love for goddes sake, by his comandement. For if it were reson that a man sholde haten his enemy, for sothe god nolde nat receiven us to his love that been hise enemys. Agayns three manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym, he shal doon three thinges, as thus. Agayns hate and rancour of herte, he shal love him in herte. Agayns chying and wikkede wordes, he shal preye for his enemy. And agayn the wikked dede of his enemy, he shal doon him bountee. For Crist seith, 'loveth youre enemys, and preyeth for hem that speke yow harm; and eek for hem that yow chacen and pursewen, and doth bountee to hem that yow haten.' Lo, thus comaundeth us oure lord Iesu Crist, to do to oure enemys. For soothly, nature dryveth us to loven oure freendes, and parfey, oure enemys han more nede to love than oure freendes; and they that more nede have, certes, to hem shal men doon goodnesse; and certes, in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Iesu Crist, that deyde for hise enemys. And in-as-muche as thilke love is the more grevous to perfourne, in-so-muche is the more gretter the merite; and therfore the lovinge of oure enemy hath confounded the venim of the devel. For right as the devel is disconfited by humilitee, right so is he wounded to the deeth by love of oure enemy. Certes, thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venim of Envy fro mannes herte. The spes of this pas shullen be more largely in hir chapitres folwinge declared.

Sequitur de Ira.

§32. After Envy wol I discryven the sinne of Ire. For soothly, who-so hath envye upon his neighebor, anon he wole comunly finde him a matere of wratthe, in word or in dede, agayns him to whom he hath envye. And as wel comth Ire of Pryde, as of Envy; for soothly, he that is proude or envious is lightly wrooth.

§33. This sinne of Ire, after the discryving of seint Augustin, is wikked wil to been avenged by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosophre, is the fervent blood of man y-quiked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to him that he hateth. For certes the herte of man, by eschaufinge and moevinge of his blood, wexeth so trouble, that he is out of alle Iugement of resoun. But ye shal understonde that Ire is in two maneres; that oon of hem is good, and that other is wikked. The gode Ire is by Ialousye of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse and agayns wikkednesse; and therfore seith a wys man, that 'Ire is bet than pley.' This Ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitterness; nat wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the misdede of the man; as seith the prophete David, *Irascimini et nolite peccare*. Now understondeth, that wikked Ire is in two maneres, that is to seyn, sodeyn Ire or hastif Ire, withouten avisement and consentinge of resoun. The mening and the sens of this is, that the resoun of man ne consente nat to thilke sodeyn Ire; and thanne it is venial. Another Ire is ful wikked, that comth of felonye of herte avysed and cast biforn; with wikked wil to do vengeance, and therto his resoun consenteth; and soothly this is deedly sinne. This Ire is so displesant to god, that it troubleth his hous and chaceth the holy goost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth the lyknesse of god, that is to seyn, the vertu that is in mannes soule; and put in him the lyknesse of the devel, and binimeth the man fro god that is his rightful lord. This Ire is a ful greet plesaunce to the devel; for it is the develes fourneys, that is eschaufed with the fyr of helle. For certes, right so as fyr is more mighty to destroyen erthely thinges than any other element, right so Ire is mighty to destroyen alle spirituel thinges. Loke how that fyr of smale gledes, that been almost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been touched with brimston; right so Ire wol everemo quiken agayn, whan it is touched by the pryde that is covered in mannes herte. For certes fyr ne may nat comen out of no-thing, but-if it were first in the same thing naturelly; as fyr is drawn out of flintes with steel. And right so as pryde is ofte tyme matere of Ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of

Ire. Ther is a maner tree, as seith seint Isidre, that whan men maken fyr of thilke tree, and cove the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fyr of it wol lasten al a yeer or more. And right so fareth it of rancour; whan it is ones conceyved in the hertes of som men, certein, it wol lasten peraventure from oon Estre-day unto another Estre-day, and more. But certes, thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of god al thilke while.

§34. In this forseide develes fourneys ther forgen three shrewes: Pryde, that ay bloweth and encreseth the fyr by chydunge and wikked wordes. Thanne stant Envy, and holdeth the hote iren upon the herte of man with a peire of longe tonges of long rancour. And thanne stant the sinne of contumelie or stryf and cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by vileyns reprevinges. Certes, this cursed sinne anoyeth bothe to the man him-self and eek to his neighebor. For soothly, almost al the harm that any man dooth to his neighebores comth of wratthe. For certes, outrageous wratthe doth al that evere the devel him comaundeth; for he ne spareth neither Crist, ne his swete mooder. And in his outrageous anger and Ire, allas! allas! ful many oon at that tyme feleth in his herte ful wikkedly, bothe of Crist and of alle hise halwes. Is nat this a cursed vice? Yis, certes. Allas! it binimeth from man his wit and his resoun, and al his debonaire lyf espirituel that sholde kepen his soule. Certes, it binimeth eek goddes due lordshipe, and that is mannes soule, and the love of hise neighebores. It stryvethe eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveth him the quiete of his herte, and subverteth his soule.

§35. Of Ire comen thise stinking engendrures: first hate, that is old wratthe; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath loved ful longe. And thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighebores, in body or in catel. Of this cursed sinne of Ire cometh eek manslaughter. And understonde wel, that homicyde, that is manslaughter, is in dyverse wyse. Som manere of homicyde is spirituel, and som is bodily. Spirituel manslaughter is in six thinges. First, by hate; as seint Iohn seith, 'he that hateth his brother is homicyde.' Homicyde is eek by bakbytinge; of whiche bakbyteres seith Salomon, that 'they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hir neighebores.' For soothly, as wikke is to binime his good name as his lyf. Homicyde is eek, in yevinge of wikked conseil by fraude; as for to yeven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and taillages. Of whiche seith Salomon, 'Leon rorynge and bere hongry been lyke to the cruel lordshipes,' in witholdinge or abregginge of the shepe (or the hyre), or of the wages of servaunts, or elles in usure or in withdrawinge of the almesse of povre folk. For which the wyse man seith, 'fedeth him that almost dyeth for hunger'; for soothly, but-if thou fede him, thou sleest him; and alle thise been deadly sinnes. Bodily manslaughter is, whan thou sleest him with thy tonge in other manere; as whan thou comandest to sleen a man, or elles yevest him conseil to sleen a man. Manslaughter in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe; right as a Iustice dampneth him that is coupable to the deeth. But lat the Iustice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delyt to spille blood, but for kepinge of rightwisenesse. Another homicyde is, that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon otherwise escape from his owene deeth. But certainly, if he may escape withouten manslaughter of his adversarie, and sleeth him, he doth sinne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly sinne. Eek if a man, by caas or aventure, shete an arwe or caste a stoon with which he sleeth a man, he is homicyde. Eek if a womman by negligence overlyeth hir child in hir sleping, it is homicyde and deedly sinne. Eek whan man destourbeth concepcion of a child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drinkinge venemouse herbes, thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drinkes wilfully, or elles putteth certeine material thinges in hir secree places to slee the child; or elles doth unkindly sinne, by which man or womman shedeth hir nature in manere or in place ther-as a child may nat be conceived; or elles, if a womman have conceyved and hurt hir-self, and sleeth the child, yet is it homicyde. What seye we eek of wommen that mordren hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicyde. Homicyde is eek if a man approacheth to a womman by desir of lecherye, thurgh which the child is perished, or elles smyteth a womman wittingly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle thise been homicydes and horrible deedly sinnes. Yet comen ther of Ire manye mo sinnes, as wel in word as in thoght and in dede; as he that arreteth upon god, or blameth god, of thing of which he is him-self gilty; or despyseth god and alle hise halwes, as doon thise cusede hasardours in diverse contrees. This cursed sinne doon they, whan they felen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of god and of hise halwes. Also, whan they treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter, thilke sinne is so greet, that unnethe may it been relesed, but that the mercy of god passeth alle hise werkes; it is so greet and he so benigne. Thanne comth of Ire attrayngre; whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his sinne, than wole he be angry and answeren hokerly

and angrily, and deffenden or excusen his sinne by unstedfastnesse of his flesh; or elles he dide it for to holde companye with hise felawes, or elles, he seith, the fend entyced him; or elles he dide it for his youthe, or elles his complexioun is so corageous, that he may nat forbere; or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certein age; or elles, he seith, it cometh him of gentillesse of hise auncestres; and semblable thinges. Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir sinnes, that they ne wol nat deliver hem-self. For soothly, no wight that excuseth him wilfully of his sinne may nat been delivered of his sinne, til that he mekely biknoweth his sinne. After this, thanne cometh swering, that is expres agayn the comandement of god; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of Ire. God seith: 'thou shalt nat take the name of thy lord god in veyn or in ydel.' Also oure lord Iesu Crist seith by the word of saint Mathew: '*Nolite iurare omnino*: ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevene, for it is goddes trone; ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet; ne by Ierusalem, for it is the citee of a greet king; ne by thyne heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whyt ne blak. But seyeth by youre word, "ye, ye," and "nay, nay"; and what that is more, it is of yvel,' seith Crist. For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so sinfully, in dismembinge of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body. For certes, it semeth that ye thinke that the cursed Iewes ne dismembred nat y-nough the preciose persone of Crist, but ye disembre him more. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of god in youre swering, as seith Ieremye *quarto capitulo*, '*Iurabis in veritate, in iudicio et in iusticia*: thou shalt kepe three condicions; thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse.' This is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth; for every lesinge is agayns Crist. For Crist is verray trouthe. And think wel this, that every greet swerere, nat compelled lawefully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whyl he useth swich unleveful swering. Thou shalt sweren eek in doom, whan thou art constreyned by thy domesman to witnessen the trouthe. Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye ne for favour, ne for mede, but for rightwisnesse; for declaracioun of it to the worship of god and helping of thyne evene-cristene. And therefore, every man that taketh goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on him the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and liveth agayns Cristes livinge and his techinge, alle they taken goddes name in ydel. Loke eek what saint Peter seith, *Actuum quarto capitulo*, '*Non est aliud nomen sub celo*,' &c. 'Ther nis noon other name,' seith saint Peter, 'under hevene, yeven to men, in which they mowe be saved;' that is to seyn, but the name of Iesu Crist. Take kepe eek how that the precious name of Crist, as seith saint Paul *ad Philipenses secundo*, '*In nomine Iesu*, &c.: that in the name of Iesu every knee of hevenely creatures, or erthely, or of helle sholden bowe'; for it is so heigh and so worshipful, that the cursed feend in helle sholde tremblen to heren it y-nempned. Thanne semeth it, that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despyse him more boldely than dide the cursed Iewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth whan he hereth his name.

§36. Now certes, sith that swering, but-if it be lawefully doon, is so heighly deffended, muche worse is forswering falsly, and yet nedeless.

§37. What seye we eek of hem that delyten hem in swering, and holden it a gentrie or a manly dede to swere grete othes? And what of hem that, of verray usage, ne cesse nat to swere grete othes, al be the cause nat worth a straw? Certes, this is horrible sinne. Sweringe sodeynly with-oute avysement is eek a sinne. But lat us go now to thilke horrible swering of adiuracioun and coniuracioun, as doon thise false enchauntours or nigromanciens in bacins ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle, or in a fyr, or in a shulder-boon of a sheep. I can nat seye but that they doon cursedly and damnably, agayns Crist and al the feith of holy chirche.

§38. What seye we of hem that bileven in divynails, as by flight or by noyse of briddes, or of bestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkinge of dores, or crakkinge of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse? Certes, al this thing is deffended by god and by al holy chirche. For which they been acursed, til they come to amendement, that on swich filthe setten hir bileve. Charmes for woundes or maladye of men, or of bestes, if they taken any effect, it may be peraventure that god suffreth it, for folk sholden yeve the more feith and reverence to his name.

§39. Now wol I speken of lesinges, which generally is fals significacioun of word, in entente to de-ceyven his evene-cristene. Som lesinge is of which ther comth noon advantage to no wight: and som lesinge turneth to the ese or profit of o man, and to disese and damage of another man. Another lesinge is for to saven his lyf or his catel. Another lesinge comth of delyt for to lye, in which delyt they wol forge a long tale, and peynten it with alle circumstaunces, where al the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesinge comth, for he wole sustene his word; and som lesinge comth of recchelesnesse, with-outen avysement; and semblable thinges.

§40. Lat us now touche the vyce of flateringe, which ne comth nat gladly but for drede or for coveitise. Flaterye is generally wrongful preisinge. Flatereres been the develes norices, that norissen hise children with milk of losengerie. For sothe, Salomon seith, that 'flaterie is wors than detraccioun.' For som-tyme detraccion maketh an hautein man be the more humble, for he dredeth detraccion; but certes flaterye, that maketh a man to enhauncen his herte and his contaunce. Flatereres been the develes enchauntours; for they make a man to wene of him-self be lyk that he nis nat lyk. They been lyk to Iudas that bitraysed [god; and thise flatereres bitraysen] a man to sellen him to his enemy, that is, to the devel. Flatereres been the develes chapelleyens, that singen evere *Placebo*. I rekene flaterye in the vyces of Ire; for ofte tyme, if o man be wrooth with another, thanne wol he flateren som wight to sustene him in his querele.

§41. Speke we now of swich cursinge as comth of irous herte. Malisoun generally may be seyde every maner power or harm. Swich cursinge bireveth man fro the regne of god, as seith seint Paul. And ofte tyme swich cursinge wrongfully retorneth agayn to him that curseth, as a brid that retorneth agayn to his owene nest. And over alle thing men oghten eschewe to cursen hir children, and yeven to the devel hir engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certes, it is greet peril and greet sinne.

§42. Lat us thanne speken of chydinge and reproche, whiche been ful grete woundes in mannes herte; for they unsowen the semes of frendshipe in mannes herte. For certes, unnethes may a man pleyntly been accorded with him that hath him openly revyled and reprevd in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly sinne, as Crist seith in the gospel. And tak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighber, outhere he repreveth him by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as 'mesel,' 'croked harlot,' or by som sinne that he dooth. Now if he reprove him by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the reprove to Iesu Crist; for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of god, and by his suffrance, be it meselrie, or maheym, or maladye. And if he reprove him uncharitably of sinne, as, 'thou holour,' 'thou dronkelewe harlot,' and so forth; thanne aperteneth that to the reioysinge of the devel, that evere hath Ioye that men doon sinne. And certes, chydinge may nat come but out of a vileyns herte. For after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. And ye shul understonde that loke, by any wey, whan any man shal chastyse another, that he be war from chydinge or reprevinge. For trewely, but he be war, he may ful lightly quiken the fyr of angre and of wratthe, which that he sholde quenche, and per-aventure sleeth him which that he mighte chastyse with benigneite. For as seith Salomon, 'the amiable tonge is the tree of lyf,' that is to seyn, of lyf espirituel: and sothly, a deslaved tonge sleeth the spirites of him that repreveth, and eek of him that is reprevd. Lo, what seith seint Augustin: 'ther is no-thing so lyk the develes child as he that ofte chydeth.' Seint Paul seith eek: 'I, servant of god, bihove nat to chyde.' And how that chydinge be a vileyns thing bitwixe alle manere folk, yet it is certes most uncovenable bitwixe a man and his wyf; for there is nevere reste. And therfore seith Salomon, 'an hous that is uncovered and droppinge, and a chydinge wyf, been lyke.' A man that is in a droppinge hous in many places, though he eschewe the droppinge in o place, it droppeth on him in another place; so fareth it by a chydinge wyf. But she chyde him in o place, she wol chyde him in another. And therfore, 'bette is a morsel of breed with Ioye than an hous ful of delices, with chydinge,' seith Salomon. Seint Paul seith: 'O ye wommen, be ye subgetes to youre housbondes as bihoveth in god; and ye men, loveth youre wyves.' *Ad Colossenses, tertio*.

§43. Afterward speke we of scorninge, which is a wikked sinne; and namely, whan he scorneth a man for hise gode werkis. For certes, swiche scorneres faren lyk the foule tode, that may nat endure to smelle the sote savour of the vyne whanne it florisseth. Thise scorneres been parting felawes with the devel; for they han Ioye whan the devel winneth, and sorwe whan he leseth. They been adversaries of Iesu Crist; for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salvacion of soule.

§44. Speke we now of wikked conseil; for he that wikked conseil yeveth is a traytour. For he deceyveth him that trusteth in him, *ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheless, yet is his wikked conseil first agayn him-self. For, as seith the wyse man, every fals livinge hath this propertee in him-self, that he that wole anoye another man, he anoyeth first him-self. And men shul understonde, that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk, ne of folk that loven specially to muchel hir owene profit, ne to muche worldly folk, namely, in conseilinge of soules.

§45. Now comth the sinne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk, which is a sinne that Crist hateth outrely; and no wonder is. For he deyde for to make concord. And more shame do they to Crist, than dide they that him crucifyede; for god loveth bettre, that frendshipe be amonges folk, than he dide his owene body, the which that he yaf for unitee. Therfore been they lykned to the devel, that

evere been aboute to maken discord.

§46. Now comth the sinne of double tonge; swiche as speken faire biforn folk, and wikkedly bihinde; or elles they maken semblant as though they speke of good entencioun, or elles in game and pley, and yet they speke of wikked entente.

§47. Now comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethe may he restore the damage.

Now comth manace, that is an open folye; for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth more than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme.

Now cometh ydel wordes, that is with-uten profit of him that speketh tho wordes, and eek of him that herkneth tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedeles, or with-uten entente of naturel profit. And al-be-it that ydel wordes been som tyme venial sinne, yet sholde men douten hem; for we shul yeve rekeninge of hem bfore god.

Now comth langlinge, that may nat been withoute sinne. And, as seith Salomon, 'it is a sinne of apert folye.' And therfore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed him how that men sholde plesse the peple; and he answerde, 'do many gode werkes, and spek fewe langles.'

After this comth the sinne of laperes, that been the develes apes; for they maken folk to laughe at hir laperie, as folk doon at the gaudes of an ape. Swiche laperes deffendeth seint Paul. Loke how that vertuose wordes and holy conforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist; right so conforten the vileyns wordes and knakkes of laperis hem that travaillen in the service of the devel. Thise been the sinnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of Ire and of othere sinnes mo.

Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire.

§48. The remedye agayns Ire is a vertu that men clepen Mansuetude, that is Debonairetee; and eek another vertu, that men callen Pacience or Suffrance.

§49. Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stiringes and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne skippe nat out by angre ne by Ire. Suffrance suffreth swetely alle the anoyaunces and the wronges that men doon to man outward. Seint Ierome seith thus of debonairetee, that 'it doth noon harm to no wight, ne seith; ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn, he ne eschaufteth nat agayns, his resoun.' This vertu som-tyme comth of nature; for, as seith the philosophre, 'a man is a quik thing, by nature debonaire and tretable to goodnesse; but whan debonairetee is enformed of grace, thanne is it the more worth.'

§50. Pacience, that is another remedye agayns Ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to him. The philosophre seith, that 'pacience is thilke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee and every wikked word.' This vertu maketh a man lyk to god, and maketh him goddes owene dere child, as seith Crist. This vertu disconfiteth thyn enemy. And therfore seith the wyse man, 'if thou wolt venquisse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre.' And thou shalt understonde, that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thinges, agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciencies.

§51. The firste grevance is of wikkede wordes; thilke suffrede Iesu Crist with-uten grucching, ful patiently, whan the Iewes despysed and repreved him ful ofte. Suffre thou therfore patiently; for the wyse man seith: 'if thou stryve with a fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, algate thou shalt have no reste.' That other grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently, whan he was despoyled of al that he hadde in this lyf, and that nas but hise clothes. The thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful patiently in al his passioun. The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes. Wherefore I seye, that folk that maken hir servants to travaillen to grevously, or out of tyme, as on halydayes, soothly they do greet sinne. Heer-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently, and taughte us pacience, whan he bar up-on his blissed shulder the croys, up-on which he sholde suffren despitous deeth. Heer may men lerne to be patient; for certes, noght only Cristen men been patient for love of Iesu Crist, and for guerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdurable; but certes, the olde payens, that nevere were Cristene, commendeded and useden the vertu of pacience.

§52. A philosophre up-on a tyme, that wolde have beten his disciple for his grete trespas, for which he was greetly amoeved, and broghte a yerde to scourge the child; and whan this child saugh the yerde, he seyde to his maister, 'what thenke ye to do?' 'I wol bete thee,' quod the maister, 'for thy correccion.' 'For sothe,' quod the child, 'ye oghten first correcte youre-self, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child.' 'For sothe,' quod the maister al wepinge, 'thou seyst sooth; have thou the yerde, my

dere sone, and correcte me for myn inpacience.’ Of Pacience comth Obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist. And understond wel that obedience is perfit, whan that a man doth gladly and hastily, with good herte entierly, al that he sholde do. Obedience generally, is to perfourne the doctrine of god and of his sovereyns, to whiche him oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwysnesse.

Sequitur de Accidia.

§53. After the sinnes of Envie and of Ire, now wol I speken of the sinne of Accidie. For Envye blindeth the herte of a man, and Ire troubleth a man; and Accidie maketh him hevye, thoughtful, and wrawe. Envye and Ire maken bitternesse in herte; which bitternesse is moder of Accidie, and binimeth him the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is Accidie the anguissch of a trouble herte; and seint Augustin seith: ‘it is anyoy of goodnesse and loye of harm.’ Certes, this is a dampnable sinne; for it doth wrong to Iesu Crist, in-as-muche as it binimeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon. But Accidie dooth no swich diligence; he dooth alle thing with anyoy, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse and unlust; for which the book seith: ‘acursed be he that doth the service of god negligently.’ Thanne is Accidie enemy to everich estaat of man; for certes, the estaat of man is in three maneres. Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam biforn that he fil into sinne; in which estaat he was holden to wirche, as in herynge and adouringe of god. Another estaat is the estaat of sinful men, in which estaat men been holden to laboure in preyinge to god for amendement of hir sinnes, and that he wole graunte hem to aysen out of hir sinnes. Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence; and certes, to alle thise thinges is Accidie enemy and contrarie. For he loveth no businesse at al. Now certes, this foule sinne Accidie is eek a ful greet enemy to the lyflode of the body; for it ne hath no purveaunce agayn temporel necessitee; for it forsluweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes tem-poreles by recchelesnesse.

§54. The fourthe thinge is, that Accidie is lyk to hem that been in the peyne of helle, by-cause of hir slouth and of hir hevynesse; for they that been dampned been so bounde, that they ne may neither wel do ne wel thinke. Of Accidie comth first, that a man is anyoyed and encombred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that god hath abhominacion of swich Accidie, as seith seint Iohan.

§55. Now comth Slouth, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce. For soothly, Slouth is so tendre, and so delicat, as seith Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne penaunce, and therfore he shendeth al that he dooth. Agayns this roten-herted sinne of Accidie and Slouth sholde men exercise hem-self to doon gode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon; thinkinge that oure lord Iesu Crist quyeth every good dede, be it never so lyte. Usage of labour is a greet thing; for it maketh, as seith seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes and harde sinwes; and Slouth maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne comth drede to biginne to werke any gode werkes; for certes, he that is enclyned to sinne, him thinketh it is so greet an emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevous and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith seint Gregorie.

§56. Now comth wanhope, that is despeir of the mercy of god, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede; imagininge that he hath doon so muche sinne, that it wol nat availen him, though he wolde repenten him and forsake sinne: thurgh which despeir or drede he abaundoneth al his herte to every maner sinne, as seith seint Augustin. Which dampnable sinne, if that it continue un-to his ende, it is cleped sinning in the holy gost. This horrible sinne is so perilous, that he that is despeired, ther nis no felonye ne no sinne that he douteth for to do; as shewed wel by Iudas. Certes, aboven alle sinnes thanne is this sinne most displesant to Crist, and most adversarie. Soothly, he that despeireth him is lyk the coward champion recreant, that seith creant withoute nede. Allas! allas! nedeles is he recreant and nedeles despeired. Certes, the mercy of god is evere redy to every penitent, and is aboven alle hise werkes. Allas! can nat a man bithinke him on the gospel of seint Luk, 15., where-as Crist seith that ‘as wel shal ther be loye in hevne upon a sinful man that doth penitence, as up-on nynety and nyne rightful men that neden no penitence?’ Loke forther, in the same gospel, the loye and the feste of the gode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to his fader. Can they nat remembren hem eek, that, as seith seint Luk *xxiii* *capitulo*, how that the thief that was hanged bisyde Iesu Crist, seyde: ‘Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest in-to thy regne?’ ‘For sothe,’ seyde Crist, ‘I seye to thee, to-day shaltow been with

me in Paradys.' Certes, ther is noon so horrible sinne of man, that it ne may, in his lyf, be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist. Allas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeired, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have. Thanne cometh Sompnolence, that is, sluggish slombringe, which maketh a man be hevy and dul, in body and in soule; and this sinne comth of Slouthe. And certes, the tyme that, by wey of resoun, men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe; but-if ther were cause resonable. For soothly, the morwe-tyde is most covenable, a man to seye his preyer, and for to thinken on god, and for to honoure god, and to yeven almesse to the povre, that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo! what seith Salomon: 'who-so wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal finde.' Thanne cometh Negligence, or recchelesnesse, that rekketh of no-thing. And how that ignoraunce be moder of alle harm, certes, Negligence is the norice. Negligence ne doth no fors, whan he shal doon a thing, whether he do it weel or baddely.

§57. Of the remedie of thise two sinnes, as seith the wyse man, that 'he that dredeth god, he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon.' And he that loveth god, he wol doon diligence to plesse god by his werkes, and abaundone him-self, with al his might, wel for to doon. Thanne comth ydelnesse, that is the yate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at him at discovert, by temptacion on every syde. This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vileyns thoghtes, and of alle Iangles, truffles, and of alle ordure. Certes, the hevene is yeven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith: that 'they ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men,' that is to seyn, in purgatorie. Certes, thanne semeth it, they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but-if they doon penitence.

§58. Thanne comth the sinne that men clepen *Tarditas*, as whan a man is to latrede or taryinge, er he wole turne to god; and certes, that is a greet folye. He is lyk to him that falleth in the dich, and wol nat aryse. And this vyce comth of a fals hope, that he thinketh that he shal live longe; but that hope failleth ful ofte.

§59. Thanne comth Lachesse; that is he, that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it and stinten; as doon they that han any wight to governe, and ne taken of him na-more kepe, anon as they finden any contrarie or any anoy. Thise been the newe sheperdes, that leten hir sheep witingly go renne to the wolf that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. Of this comth poverté and destruccioun, bothe of spirituel and temporel thinges. Thanne comth a manere coldnesse, that freseth al the herte of man. Thanne comth undevoicioun, thurgh which a man is so blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swiche langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in holy chirche, ne here ne thinke of no devocioun, ne travaille with hise handes in no good werk, that it nis him unsavory and al apalled. Thanne wexeth he slow and slombry, and sone wol be wrooth, and sone is enclyned to hate and to envye. Thanne comth the sinne of worldly sorwe, swich as is cleped *tristicia*, that sleeth man, as seint Paul seith. For certes, swich sorwe werketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also; for ther-of comth, that a man is anoyed of his owene lyf. Wherefore swich sorwe shorteth ful ofte the lyf of a man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kinde.

Remedium contra peccatum Accidie.

§60. Agayns this horrible sinne of Accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called *Fortitudo* or Strengthe; that is, an affeccioun thurgh which a man despyseth anoyous thinges. This vertu is so mighty and so vigorous, that it dar withstonde mightily and wysely kepen him-self fro perils that been wikked, and wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel. For it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as Accidie abateth it and maketh it feble. For this *Fortitudo* may endure by long suffraunce the travailles that been covenable.

§61. This vertu hath manye speces; and the firste is cleped Magnanimité, that is to seyn, greet corage. For certes, ther bihoveth greet corage agains Accidie, lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the sinne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thinges and grevouse thinges, by hir owene wil, wysely and resonably. And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man more by queyntise and by sleight than by strengthe, therfore men shal withstonden him by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun. Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith, and hope in god and in hise seintes, to acheve and acomplise the gode werkes in the whiche he purposeth fermely to continue. Thanne comth seuretee or sikernes; and that is, whan a man ne douteth no travaille in tyme cominge of the gode werkes that a man hath bigonne. Thanne comth Magnificence, that is to seyn, whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse that he hath bigonne; and that is the ende why that men sholde do gode werkes; for in the acomplissinge of grete goode werkes lyth the grete guerdoun.

Thanne is ther Constaunce, that is, stablenesse of corage; and this sholde been in herte by stedefast feith, and in mouth, and in beringe, and in chere and in dede. Eke ther been mo speciale remedies agains Accidie, in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the loyes of hevene, and in trust of the grace of the holy goost, that wole yeve him might to perfourne his gode entente.

Sequitur de Auaricia.

§62. After Accidie wol I speke of Avarice and of Coveitise, of which sinne seith seint Paule, that 'the rote of alle harmes is Coveitise': *Ad Timotheum, sexto capitulo*. For soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in it-self and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of god, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of worldly thinges.

§63. Avarice, after the description of seint Augustin, is likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thinges. Som other folk seyn, that Avarice is, for to purchacen manye erthely thinges, and nothing yeve to hem that han nede. And understand, that Avarice ne stant nat only in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science and in glorie, and in every manere of outrageous thing is Avarice and Coveitise. And the difference bitwixe Avarice and Coveitise is this. Coveitise is for to coveite swiche thinges as thou hast nat; and Avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thinges as thou hast, with-oute rightful nede. Soothly, this Avarice is a sinne that is ful dampnable; for al holy writ curseth it, and speketh agayns that vyce; for it dooth wrong to Iesu Crist. For it bireveth him the love that men to him owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun; and maketh that the avaricious man hath more hope in his catel than in Iesu Crist, and dooth more observance in kepinge of his tresor than he dooth to service of Iesu Crist. And therefore seith seint Paul *ad Ephesios, quinto*, that 'an avaricious man is in the thraldom of ydolatrie.'

§64. What difference is bitwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man, but that an ydolastre, per aventure, ne hath but o mawmet or two, and the avaricious man hath manye? For certes, every florin in his cofre is his mawmet. And certes, the sinne of Mawmetrye is the firste thing that God deffended in the ten comaundments, as bereth witnesse *Exodi, capitulo xx*: 'Thou shall have no false goddes bifore me, ne thou shall make to thee no grave thing.' Thus is an avaricious man, that loveth his tresor bifore god, an ydolastre, thurgh this cursed sinne of Avarice. Of Coveitise comen thise harde lordshipes, thurgh whiche men been distreyned by tailages, custumes, and cariages, more than hir duetee or resoun is. And eek they taken of hir bonde-men amerciments, whiche mighten more resonably ben cleped extorcions than amerciments. Of whiche amerciments and raunsoninge of bondemen, somme lordes stywardes seyn, that it is rightful; for-as-muche as a cherl hath no temporel thing that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn. But certes, thise lordshipes doon wrong, that bireven hir bonde-folk thinges that they nevere yave hem: *Augustinus de Civitate, libro nono*. Sooth is, that the condicioun of thraldom and the firste cause of thraldom is for sinne; *Genesis, quinto*.

§65. Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature. Wherefore thise lordes ne sholde nat muche glorifyen hem in hir lordshipes, sith that by naturel condicion they been nat lordes of thralles; but for that thraldom comth first by the desert of sinne. And forther-over, ther-as the lawe seith, that temporel godes of bonde-folk been the godes of hir lordshipes, ye, that is for to understonde, the godes of the emperour, to deffenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. And therefore seith Seneca: 'thy prudence sholde live benignely with thy thralles.' Thilke that thou clepest thy thralles been goddes peple; for humble folk been Cristes freendes; they been contubernial with the lord.

§66. Think eek, that of swich seed as cherles springeth, of swich seed springen lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord. The same deeth that taketh the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord. Wherefore I rede, do right so with thy cherl, as thou woldest that thy lord dide with thee, if thou were in his plyt. Every sinful man is a cherl to sinne. I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wyse with thy cherles, that they rather love thee than drede. I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is; and skile it is, that men do hir devoir ther-as it is due; but certes, extorcions and despit of youre underlinges is dampnable.

§67. And forther-over understand wel, that thise conquerours or tiraunts maken ful ofte thralles of hem, that been born of as royal blood as been they that hem conqueren. This name of thraldom was nevere erst couth, til that Noe seyde, that his sone Canaan sholde be thral to hise bretheren for his sinne. What seye we thanne of hem that pilen and doon extorcions to holy chirche? Certes, the swerd, that men yeven first to a knight whan he is newe dubbed, signifyeth that he sholde deffenden holy chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it; and who so dooth, is traitour to Crist. And, as seith seint Augustin,

'they been the develes wolves, that stranglen the sheep of Iesu Crist'; and doon worse than wolves. For soothly, whan the wolf hath ful his wombe, he stinteth to strangle sheep. But soothly, the pilours and destroyours of goddes holy chirche ne do nat so; for they ne stinte nevere to pile. Now, as I have seyde, sith so is that sinne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus; that thilke tyme that al this world was in sinne, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subieccioun. But certes, sith the tyme of grace cam, god ordeyned that som folk sholde be more heigh in estaat and in degree, and som folk more lowe, and that everich sholde be served in his estaat and in his degree. And therfore, in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hir thralles free out of thraldom. And therfore, certes, the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord. The Pope calleth him-self servant of the servaunts of god; but for-as-muche as the estaat of holy chirche ne mighte nat han be, ne the commune profit mighte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but-if god hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree and som men lower: therfore was sovereignty ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hir underlinges or hir subgets in resoun, as ferforth as it lyth in hir power; and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde. Wherefore I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves, that devouren the possessiouns or the catel of povre folk wrongfully, with-outen mercy or mesure, they shul receyven, by the same mesure that they han mesured to povre folk, the mercy of Iesu Crist, but-if it be amended. Now comth deceite bitwixe marchant and marchant. And thow shalt understonde, that marchandyse is in two maneres; that oon is bodily, and that other is goostly. That oon is honeste and leveful, and that other is deshoneste and unleveful. Of thilke bodily marchandyse, that is leveful and honeste, is this; that, there-as god hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to him-self, thanne is it honeste and leveful, that of habundaunce of this contree, that men helpe another contree that is more nedy. And therfore, ther mote been marchants to bringen fro that o contree to that other hire marchandyses. That other merchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesinges and false othes, is cursed and dampnable. Espirituel marchandyse is proprely Symonye, that is, ententif desyr to byen thing espirituel, that is, thing that aperteneth to the seintuarie of god and to cure of the soule. This desyr, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, al-be-it that his desyr ne take noon effect, yet is it to him a deedly sinne; and if he be ordred, he is irreguler. Certes, Symonye is cleped of Symon Magus, that wolde han boght, for temporel catel, the yifte that god hadde yeven, by the holy goost, to seint Peter and to the apostles. And therfore understond, that bothe he that selleth and he that byeth thinges espirituels, been cleped Symonials; be it by catel, be it by procuringe, or by fleshly preyere of hise freendes, fleshly freendes, or espirituel freendes. Fleshly, in two maneres; as by kinrede or othere freendes. Soothly, if they praye for him that is nat worthy and able, it is Symonye if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able, ther nis noon. That other manere is, whan a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem, only for wikked fleshly affeccioun that they have un-to the persone; and that is foul Symonye. But certes, in service, for which men yeven thinges espirituels un-to hir servants, it moot been understonde that the service moot been honeste, and elles nat; and eek that it be with-outen bargayninge, and that the persone be able. For, as seith Seint Damasie, 'alle the sinnes of the world, at regard of this sinne, am as thing of noght'; for it is the gretteste sinne that may be, after the sinne of Lucifer and Antecrist. For, by this sinne, god forleseth the chirche, and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood, by hem that yeven chirches to hem that been nat digne. For they putten in theves, that stelen the soules of Iesu Christ and destroyen his patrimoine. By swiche undigne preestes and curates han lewed men the lasse reverence of the sacraments of holy chirche; and swiche yeveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten in-to the chirche the develes owene sone. They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen to the wolf that strangleth hem. And therfore shul they nevere han part of the pasture of lambes, that is, the blisse of hevene. Now comth hasardrye with hise apurtenaunces, as tables and rafles; of which comth deceite, false othes, chydinges, and alle ravines, blaspheminge and reneyinge of god, and hate of hise neighebores, wast of godes, misspendinge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughtre. Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been with-outen greet sinne whyles they haunte that craft. Of avarice comen eek lesinges, thefte, fals witnessse, and false othes. And ye shul understonde that thise been grete sinnes, and expres agayn the comaundements of god, as I have seyde. Fals witnessse is in word and eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighebores goode name by thy fals witnessing, or bireven him his catel or his heritage by thy fals witnessing; whan thou, for ire or for mede, or for envye, berest fals witnessse, or accusest him or excusest him by thy fals witnessse, or elles excusest thy-self falsly. Ware yow, questmongeres and notaries! Certes, for fals witnessing was Susanna in ful gret sorwe

and peyne, and many another mo. The sinne of thefte is eek expres agayns goddes heste, and that in two maneres, corporel and espirituel. Corporel, as for to take thy neighebores catel agayn his wil, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure. By steling eek of false enditements upon him, and in borwinge of thy neighebores catel, in entente nevere to payen it agayn, and semblable thinges. Espirituel thefte is Sacrilege, that is to seyn, hurtinge of holy thinges, or of thinges sacred to Crist, in two maneres; by reson of the holy place, as chirches or chirche-hawes, for which every vileyns sinne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places. Also, they that withdrawen falsly the rightes that longen to holy chirche. And pleylny and generally, sacrilege is to reven holy thing fro holy place, or unholy thing out of holy place, or holy thing out of unholy place.

Relevacio contra peccatum Avaricie.

§68. Now shul ye understonde, that the relevinge of Avarice is misericorde, and pitee largely taken. And men mighten axe, why that misericorde and pitee is relevinge of Avarice? Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man; for he delyteth him in the kepinge of his tresor, and nat in the rescowinge ne relevinge of his evene-cristene. And therfore fore speke I first of misericorde. Thanne is misericorde, as seith the philosophre, a vertu, by which the corage of man is stired by the misese of him that is mised. Up-on which misericorde folweth pitee, in parfourninge of charitable werkes of misericorde. And certes, thise thinges moeven a man to misericorde of Iesu Crist, that he yaf him-self for oure gilt, and suffred deeth for misericorde, and for gaf us oure originale sinnes; and therby releessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amenused the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and yeveth grace wel to do, and atte laste the blisse of hevene. The speses of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to yeve and to foryeven and relese, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his evene-cristene, and eek to chastyse there as nede is. Another manere of remedie agayns Avarice is resonable largesse; but soothly, here bihoveth the consideracioun of the grace of Iesu Crist, and of hise temporel goodes, and eek of the godes perdurables that Crist yaf to us; and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgon al that he hath, save only that he hath despended in gode werkes.

§69. But for-as-muche as som folk been unmesurable, men oghten eschue fool-largesse, that men clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool-large ne yeveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel. Soothly, what thing that he yeveth for veyne glorie, as to minstrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath sinne ther-of and noon almesse. Certes, he leseth foule his good, that ne seketh with the yifte of his good no-thing but sinne. He is lyk to an hors that seketh rather to drinken drovy or trouble water than for to drinken water of the clere welle. And for-as-muchel as they yeven ther as they sholde nat yeven, to hem aperteneth thilke malisoun that Crist shal yeven at the day of dome to hem that shullen been dampned.

Sequitur de Gula.

§70. After Avarice comth Glotony, which is expres eek agayn the comandement of god. Glotony is unmesurable appetyt to ete or to drinke, or elles to doon y-nogh to the unmesurable appetyt and desordeynce coveityse to eten or to drinke. This sinne corrupped al this world, as is wel shewed in the sinne of Adam and of Eve. Loke eek, what seith seint Paul of Glotony. 'Manye,' seith seint Paul, 'goon, of whiche I have ofte seyde to yow, and now I seye it wepinge, that they been the enemys of the croys of Crist; of whiche the ende is deeth, and of whiche hir wombe is hir god, and hir glorie in confusioun of hem that so savenen erthely thinges.' He that is usaunt to this sinne of Glotony, he ne may no sinne withstonde. He moot been in servage of alle vyces, for it is the develes hord ther he hydeth him and resteth. This sinne hath manye speses. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun; and therefore, whan a man is dronken, he hath lost his resoun; and this is deedly sinne. But soothly, whan that a man is nat wont to strong drinke, and peraventure ne knoweth nat the strengthe of the drinke, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drinketh the more, al be he sodeynly caught with drinke, it is no deedly sinne, but venial. The seconde spece of Glotony is, that the spirit of a man wexeth al trouble; for dronkenesse bireveth him the discrecioun of his wit. The thridde spece of Glotony is, whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful manere of etinge. The fourthe is whan, thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempred. The fifthe is, foryetelnesse by to muchel drinkinge; for which somtyme a man foryeteth er the morwe what he dide at even or on the night biforn.

§71. In other manere been distinct the speses of Glotony, after seint Gregorie. The firste is, for to

ete biforn tyme to ete. The seconde is, whan a man get him to delicat mete or drinke. The thridde is, whan men taken to muche over mesure. The fourthe is curiositee, with greet entente to maken and apparaillen his mete. The fifthe is, for to eten to gredily. Thise been the fyve fingres of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to sinne.

Remedium contra peccatum Gule.

§72. Agayns Glotonye is the remedie Abstinence, as seith Galien; but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it only for the hele of his body. Seint Augustin wole, that Abstinence be doon for vertu and with pacience. Abstinence, he seith, is litel worth, but if a man have good wil ther-to, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charitee, and that men doon it for godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevene.

§73. The felawes of Abstinence been Attemperaunce, that holdeth the mene in alle thinges: eek Shame, that eschueth alle deshonestee: Suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drinks, ne dooth no fors of to outrageous apparailinge of mete. Mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslavec appetyt of etinge: Sobrenesse also, that restreyneth the outrage of drinke: Sparinge also, that restreyneth the delicat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softly; wherfore som folk stonden of hir owene wil, to eten at the lasse leyser.

Sequitur de Luxuria.

§74. After Glotonye, thanne comth Lecherie; for thise two sinnes been so ny cosins, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe. God woot, this sinne is ful displeaunt thing to god; for he seyde himself, 'do no lecherie.' And therfore he putte grete peynes agayns this sinne in the olde lawe. If womman thral were taken in this sinne, she sholde be beten with staves to the deeth. And if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones. And if she were a bisshoppes doghter, she sholde been brent, by goddes comandement. Forther over, by the sinne of Lecherie, god dreynte al the world at the diluge. And after that, he brente fyve citees with thonder-leyt, and sank hem in-to helle.

§75. Now lat us speke thanne of thilke stinkinge sinne of Lecherie that men clepe Avoutrie of wedded folk, that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. Seint Iohn seith, that avoutiers shullen been in helle in a stank brenninge of fyr and of brimston; in fyr, for the lecherie; in brimston, for the stink of hir ordure. Certes, the brekinge of this sacrement is an horrible thing; it was maked of god him-self in paradys, and confermed by Iesu Crist, as witnesseth seint Mathew in the gospel: 'A man shal lete fader and moder, and taken him to his wyf, and they shullen be two in o flesh.' This sacrement bitokneth the knittinge togidre of Crist and of holy chirche. And nat only that god forbad avoutrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat coveite thy neighebores wyf. In this heeste, seith seint Augustin, is forboden alle manere coveitise to doon lecherie. Lo what seith seint Mathew in the gospel: that 'who-so seeth a womman to coveitise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hir in his herte.' Here may ye seen that nat only the dede of this sinne is forboden, but eek the desyr to doon that sinne. This cursed sinne anyeth grevousliche hem that it haunten. And first, to hir soule; for he oblygeth it to sinne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable. Un-to the body anyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth him, and wasteth, and shent him, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the feend of helle; it wasteth his catel and his substaunce. And certes, if it be a foul thing, a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thing whan that, for swich ordure, wommen dispenden up-on men hir catel and substaunce. This sinne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir gode fame, and al hir honour; and it is ful pleasaunt to the devel; for ther-by winneth he the moste partie of this world. And right as a marchant delyteth him most in chaffare that he hath most advantage of, right so delyteth the feend in this ordure.

§76. This is that other hand of the devel, with fyve fingres, to cacche the peple to his vileinye. The firste finger is the fool lookinge of the fool womman and of the fool man, that sleeth, right as the basilicok sleeth folk by the venim of his sighte; for the coveitise of eyen folweth the coveitise of the herte. The seconde finger is the vileyns touchinge in wikkede manere; and ther-fore seith Salomon, that who-so toucheth and handleth a womman, he fareth lyk him that handleth the scorpioun that stingeth and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his enveniminge; as who-so toucheth warm pich, it shent hise fingres. The thridde, is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. The fourthe finger is the kissinge; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brenninge ovne or of a fourneys. And more fooles been they that kissen in vileinye; for that mouth is the mouth of helle: and namely, thise olde dotardes holours, yet wol they kisse, though they may nat do, and smatre hem. Certes, they been lyk to houndes; for an hound, whan he comth by the roser or by othere [bussches],

though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenance to pisse. And for that many man weneth that he may nat sinne, for no likerousnesse that he doth with his wyf; certes, that opinion is fals. God woot, a man may sleen him-self with his owene knyf, and make him-selven dronken of his owene tonne. Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thing that he loveth biforn god, it is his maumet, and he is an ydolastre. Man sholde loven his wyf by discrecioun, paciently and atemprely; and thanne is she as though it were his suster. The fifthe finger of the develes hand is the stinking dede of Lecherie. Certes, the fyve fingres of Glotonie the feend put in the wombe of a man, and with hise fyve fynghes of Lecherie he gripeth him by the reynes, for to throwen him in-to the fourneys of helle; ther-as they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and wepinge and wailinge, sharp hunger and thirst, and grimnesse of develes that shullen al to-trede hem, withouten respit and withouten ende. Of Lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse species; as fornicacioun, that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat married; and this is deedly sinne and agayns nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature is agayns nature. Parfay, the resoun of a man telleth eek him wel that it is deedly sinne, for-as-muche as god forbad Lecherie. And seint Paul yeveth hem the regne, that nis dewe to no wight but to hem that doon deedly sinne. Another sinne of Lecherie is to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhede; for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a mayden out of the hyeste degree that is in this present lyf, and bireveth hir thilke precious fruit that the book clepeth 'the hundred fruit.' I ne can seye it noon other weyes in English, but in Latin it highte *Centesimus fructus*. Certes, he that so dooth is cause of manye damages and vileinyes, mo than any man can rekene; right as he som-tyme is cause of alle damages that bestes don in the feeld, that breketh the hegge or the closure; thurgh which he destroyeth that may nat been restored. For certes, na-more may maydenhede be restored than an arm that is smiten fro the body may retourne agayn to wexe. She may have mercy, this woot I wel, if she do penitence; but nevere shal it be that she nas corrupt. And al-be-it so that I have spoken somewhat of Avoutrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to Avoutrie, for to eschue that foule sinne. Avoutrie in Latin is for to seyn, approching of other mannes bed, thurgh which tho that whylom weren o flesh abaundone hir bodyes to othere persones. Of this sinne, as seith the wyse man, folwen manye harmes. First, brekinge of feith; and certes, in feith is the keye of Cristendom. And whan that feith is broken and lorn, soothly Cristendom stant veyn and with-oute fruit. This sinne is eek a theft; for theft generally is for to reve a wight his thing agayns his wille. Certes, this is the fouleste theft that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir housbonde and yeveth it to hire holour to defoulen hir; and steleth hir soule fro Crist, and yeveth it to the devel. This is a fouler theft, than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice; for thise Avoutiers breken the temple of god spiritually, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is, the body and the soule, for which Crist shal destroyen hem, as seith Seint Paul. Soothly of this theft douted gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wyf preyed him of vileinye, whan he seyde, 'lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world; ne no-thing of hise thinges is out of my power, but only ye that been his wyf. And how sholde I thanne do this wikkednesse, and sinne so horribly agayns god, and agayns my lord? God it forbede.' Allas! al to litel is swich trouthe now y-founde! The thridde harm is the filthe thurgh which they breken the comandement of god, and defoulen the auctour of matrimoine, that is Crist. For certes, in-so-muche as the sacrament of mariage is so noble and so digne, so muche is it gretter sinne for to breken it; for god made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of Innocence, to multiplie man-kinde to the service of god. And therfore is the brekinge ther-of more grevous. Of which brekinge comen false heires ofte tyme, that wrongfully occupyen folkes heritages. And therfore wol Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevene, that is heritage to gode folk. Of this brekinge comth eek ofte tyme, that folk unwar wedden or sinnen with hir owene kinrede; and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be lykned to a commune gonge, where-as men purgen hir ordure. What seye we eek of putours that liven by the horrible sinne of putrie, and constreyne wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hir bodily puterie, ye, somtyme of his owene wyf or his child; as doon this baudes? Certes, thise been cursed sinnes. Understond eek, that avoutrie is set gladly in the ten comandements bitwixe theft and manslaughter; for it is the gretteste theft that may be; for it is theft of body and of soule. And it is lyk to homicide; for it kerveth a-two and breketh a-two hem that first were maked o flesh, and therfore, by the olde lawe of god, they sholde be slayn. But natheles, by the lawe of Iesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avoutrie, and sholde han been slayn with stones, after the wil of the Iewes, as was hir lawe: 'Go,' quod Iesu Crist, 'and have na-more wil to sinne'; or, 'wille na-more to do sinne.' Soothly, the vengeance of avoutrie is

awarded to the peynes of helle, but-if so be that it be destourbed by penitence. Yet been ther mo spesces of this cursed sinne; as whan that oon of hem is religious, or elles bothe; or of folk that been entred in-to ordre, as subdekne or dekne, or preest, or hospitaliers. And evere the hyer that he is in ordre, the gretter is the sinne. The thinges that gretly agreggen hir sinne is the brekinge of hir avow of chastitee, whan they receyved the ordre. And forther-over, sooth is, that holy ordre is chief of al the tresorie of god, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee; to shewe that they been ioyned to chastitee, which that is most precious lyf that is. And thise ordred folk been specially tytled to god, and of the special meynnee of god; for which, whan they doon deedly sinne, they been the special traytours of god and of his peple; for they liven of the peple, to preye for the peple, and whyle they been suche traitours, hir preyers availen nat to the peple. Preestes been aungeles, as by the dignitee of hir misterye; but for sothe, seint Paul seith, that 'Sathanas transformeth him in an aungel of light.' Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly sinne, he may be lykned to the aungel of derknesse transformed in the aungel of light; he semeth aungel of light, but for sothe he is aungel of derknesse. Swiche preestes been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kinges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is, the devel. Belial is to seyn 'with-outen Iuge'; and so faren they; hem thinketh they been free, and han no Iuge, na-more than hath a free bole that taketh which cow that him lyketh in the toun. So faren they by wommen. For right as a free bole is y-nough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corrupcioun y-nough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree. Thise preestes, as seith the book, ne conne nat the misterie of preesthode to the peple, ne god ne knowe they nat; they ne helde hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of soden flesh that was to hem offred, but they toke by force the flesh that is rawe. Certes, so thise shrewes ne holden hem nat apayed of rosted flesh and sode flesh, with which the peple fedden hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw flesh of folkes wyves and hir doghtres. And certes, thise wommen that consenten to hir harlotrie doon greet wrong to Crist and to holy chirche and alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven alle thise him that sholde worshipec Crist and holy chirche, and preye for cristene soules. And therfore han swiche preestes, and hir lemmanes eek that consenten to hir lecherie, the malisoun of al the court cristen, till they come to amendement. The thridde spece of avoutrie is som-tyme bitwixe a man and his wyf; and that is whan they take no reward in hir assemblinge, but only to hire fleshly delyt, as seith seint Ierome; and ne rekken of nothing but that they been assembled; by-cause that they been married, al is good y-nough, as thinketh to hem. But in swich folk hath the devel power, as seyde the aungel Raphael to Thobie; for in hir assemblinge they putten Iesu Crist out of hir herte, and yeven hem-self to alle ordure. The fourthe spece is, the assemblee of hem that been of hire kinrede, or of hem that been of oon affinitee, or elles with hem with whiche hir fadres or hir kinrede han deled in the sinne of lecherie; this sinne maketh hem lyk to houndes, that taken no kepe to kinrede. And certes, parentele is in two maneres, outhur goostly or fleshly; goostly, as for to delen with hise godsibbes. For right so as he that engendreth a child is his fleshly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espirituel. For which a womman may in no lasse sinne assemblen with hir godsib than with hir owene fleshly brother. The fifthe spece is thilke abhominable sinne, of which that no man unneth oghte speke ne wryte, natheles it is openly reherced in holy writ. This cursednesse doon men and wommen in diverse entente and in diverse manere; but though that holy writ speke of horrible sinne, certes, holy writ may nat been defouled, na-more than the sonne that shyneth on the mixen. Another sinne aperteneth to lecherie, that comth in slepinge; and this sinne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupt; and this sinne men clepen pollucioun, that comth in foure maneres. Somtyme, of languissinge of body; for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man. Somtyme of infermetee; for the feblesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh mencion. Som-tyme, for surfet of mete and drinke. And somtyme of vileyns thoughtes, that been enclosed in mannes minde whan he goth to slepe; which may nat been with-oute sinne. For which men moste kepen hem wysely, or elles may men sinnen ful grevously.

Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie.

§77. Now comth the remedie agayns Lecherie, and that is, generally, Chastitee and Continence, that restreyneth alle the desordeynnee moevinges that comen of fleshly talentes. And evere the gretter merite shal he han, that most restreyneth the wikkede eschaufinges of the ordure of this sinne. And this is in two maneres, that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee of widwehode. Now shaltow understonde, that matrimoine is leefful assemblinge of man and of womman, that receyven by vertu of the sacrament the bond, thurgh which they may nat be departed in al hir lyf, that is to seyn, whyl that they liven bothe. This, as seith the book, is a ful greet sacrament. God maketh it, as I have seyde,

in paradys, and wolde him-self be born in mariage. And for to halwen mariage, he was at a weddinge, where-as he turned water in-to wyn; which was the firste miracle that he wroghte in erthe biforn hise disciples. Trewe effect of mariage clenseth fornicacioun and replenisseth holy chirche of good linage; for that is the ende of mariage; and it chaungeth deedly sinne in-to venial sinne bitwixe hem that been y-wedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that been y-wedded, as wel as the bodies. This is verray mariage, that was establissed by god er that sinne bigan, whan naturel lawe was in his right point in paradys; and it was ordeyned that o man sholde have but o womman, and o womman but o man, as seith Seint Augustin, by manye resouns.

§78. First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche. And that other is, for a man is heved of a womman; algate, by ordinaunce it sholde be so. For if a womman had mo men than oon, thanne sholde she have mo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thing biforn god; and eek a womman ne mighte nat plesse to many folk at ones. And also ther ne sholde nevere be pees ne reste amonges hem; for everich wolde axen his owene thing. And forther-over, no man ne sholde knowe his owene engendrure, ne who sholde have his heritage; and the womman sholde been the lasse biloved, fro the time that she were conioynt to many men.

§79. Now comth, how that a man sholde bere him with his wyf; and namely, in two things, that is to seyn in suffraunce and reverence, as shewed Crist whan he made first womman. For he ne made hir nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe. For ther-as the womman hath the maistrie, she maketh to muche desray; ther neden none ensamples of this. The experience of day by day oghte suffyse. Also certes, god ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe; for she can nat patiently suffre: but god made womman of the rib of Adam, for womman sholde be felawe un-to man. Man sholde bere him to his wyf in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith seint Paul: that 'a man sholde loven his wyf as Crist loved holy chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it.' So sholde a man for his wyf, if it were nede.

§80. Now how that a womman sholde be subget to hir housbonde, that telleth seint Peter. First, in obedience. And eek, as seith the decree, a womman that is a wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere ne bere witness with-out leve of hir housbonde, that is hir lord; algate, he sholde be so by resoun. She sholde eek serven him in alle honestee, and been attemptree of hir array. I wot wel that they sholde setten hir entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hir queyntise of array. Seint Ierome seith, that wyves that been apparailled in silk and in precious purple ne mowe nat clothen hem in Iesu Crist. What seith seint Iohn eek in this matere? Seint Gregorie eek seith, that no wight seketh precious array but only for veyne glorie, to been honoured the more biforn the peple. It is a greet folye, a womman to have a fair array outward and in hir-self be foul inward. A wyf sholde eek be mesurable in lokinge and in beringe and in laughinge, and discreet in alle hir wordes and hir dedes. And aboven alle worldly thing she sholde loven hir housbonde with al hir herte, and to him be trewe of hir body so sholde an housbonde eek be to his wyf. For sith that al the body is the housbondes, so sholde hir herte been, or elles ther is bitwixe hem two, as in that, no parfit mariage. Thanne shal men understonde that for three things a man and his wyf fleshly mowen assemble. The firste is in entente of engendrure of children to the service of god, for certes that is the cause fynal of matrimoine. Another cause is, to yelden everich of hem to other the dette of hir bodies, for neither of hem hath power over his owene body. The thridde is, for to eschewe lecherye and vileinye. The ferthe is for sothe deadly sinne. As to the firste, it is meritorie; the seconde also; for, as seith the decree, that she hath merite of chastitee that yeldeth to hir housbonde the dette of hir body, ye, though it be agayn hir lykinge and the lust of hir herte. The thridde manere is venial sinne, and trewely scarsly may ther any of thise be with-out venial sinne, for the corrupcion and for the delyt. The fourthe manere is for to understonde, if they assemble only for amorous love and for noon of the forseyde causes, but for to accomplice thilke brenninge delyt, they rekke nevere how ofte, sothly it is deedly sinne; and yet, with sorwe, somme folk wol peynen hem more to doon than to hir appetyt suffyseth.

§81. The seconde manere of chastitee is for to been a clene widewe, and eschue the embracings of man, and desyren the embracing of Iesu Crist. Thise been tho that han been wyves and han forgoon hir housbondes, and eek wommen that han doon lecherie and been releved by Penitence. And certes, if that a wyf coude kepen hir al chaast by licence of hir housbonde, so that she yeve nevere noon occasion that he agylte, it were to hire a greet merite. Thise manere wommen that observen chastitee moste be clene in herte as well as in body and in thought, and mesurable in clothinge and in contenance; and been abstinent in etinge and drinkinge, in spekinge, and in dede. They been the vessel or the boyste

of the blisshed Magdelene, that fulfilleth holy chirche of good odour. The thridde manere of chastitee is virginitee, and it bihoveth that she be holy in herte and clene of body; thanne is she spouse to Iesu Crist, and she is the lyf of angeles. She is the preisinge of this world, and she is as thise martirs in egalitee; she hath in hir that tonge may nat telle ne herte thinke. Virginitee baar oure lord Iesu Crist, and virgin was him-selve.

§82. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, specially to withdrawen swiche thinges as yeve occasion to thilke vileinye; as ese, etinge and drinkinge; for certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly, the beste remedie is to withdrawe the fyr. Slepinge longe in greet quitee is eek a greet norice to Lecherie.

§83. Another remedie agayns Lecherie is, that a man or a womman eschue the companye of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted; for al-be-it so that the dede is withstonden, yet is ther greet temptacioun. Soothly a whyt wal, al-though it ne brenne noght fully by stikinge of a candele, yet is the wal blak of the leyt. Ful ofte tyme I rede, that no man truste in his owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger than Sampson, and holier than Daniel, and wyser than Salomon.

§84. Now after that I have declared yow, as I can, the sevene deedly sinnes, and somme of hir branches and hir remedies, soothly, if I coude, I wolde telle yow the ten comandements. But so heigh a doctrine I lete to divines. Natheless, I hope to god they been touched in this tretice, everich of hem alle.

De Confessione.

§85. Now for-as-muche as the second partie of Penitence stant in Confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I seye, seint Augustin seith: sinne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveiten agayn the lawe of Iesu Crist; and this is for to sinne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by thy fyve wittes, that been sighte, heringe, smellinge, tastinge or savouringe, and felinge. Now is it good to understonde that that agreggeth muchel every sinne. Thou shall considere what thou art that doost the sinne, whether thou be male or femele, yong or old, gentil or thral, free or servant, hool or syk, wedded or sengle, ordred or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or secular; if she be of thy kinrede, bodily or goostly, or noon; if any of thy kinrede have sinned with hir or noon, and manye mo thinges.

§86. Another circumstaunce is this; whether it be doon in fornicacioun, or in avoutrie, or noon; incest, or noon; mayden, or noon; in manere of homicyde, or noon; horrible grete sinnes, or smale; and how longe thou hast continued in sinne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place ther thou hast do sinne; whether in other mennes hous or in thyn owene; in feeld or in chirche, or in chirche-hawe; in chirche dedicat, or noon. For if the chirche be halwed, and man or womman spille his kinde inwith that place by wey of sinne, or by wikked temptacion, the chirche is entredited til it be reconciled by the bishop; and the preest that dide swich a vileinye, to terme of al his lyf, he sholde na-more singe masse; and if he dide, he sholde doon deedly sinne at every tyme that he so songe masse. The fourthe circumstaunce is, by whiche mediatours or by whiche messagers, as for entycement, or for consentement to bere companye with felaweshipe; for many a wrecche, for to bere companye, wil go to the devel of helle. Wherfore they that eggen or consenten to the sinne been parteners of the sinne, and of the dampnacioun of the sinner. The fifthe circumstaunce is, how manye tymes that he hath sinned, if it be in his minde, and how ofte that he hath falle. For he that ofte falleth in sinne, he despiseth the mercy of god, and increeseth his sinne, and is unkinde to Crist; and he wexeth the more feble to withstonde sinne, and sinneth the more lightly, and the latter aryseth, and is the more eschew for to shryven him, namely, to him that is his confessour. For which that folk, whan they falle agayn in hir olde folies, outhur they forleten hir olde confessours al outrely, or elles they departen hir shrift in diverse places; but soothly, swich departed shrift deserveth no mercy of god of hise sinnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man sinneth, as by whiche temptacioun; and if him-self procure thilke temptacioun, or by the excytinge of other folk; or if he sinne with a womman by force, or by hir owene assent; or if the womman, maugree hir heed, hath been afforced, or noon; this shal she telle; for coveitise, or for povertie, and if it was hir procuringe or noon; and swiche manere harneys. The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his sinne, or how that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hir. And the same shal the man telle pleylny, with alle circumstaunces; and whether he hath sinned with comune bordel-wommen, or noon; or doon his sinne in holy tymes, or noon; in fasting-tymes, or noon; or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte; and hath, per-aventure, broken therfore his penance enioyned; by whos help and whos conseil; by sorcerie or craft; al moste be told. Alle thise thinges, after that they been grete or smale, engreggen the conscience of man. And eek the preest that is thy Iuge, may the bettre been avysed of his Iugement in yevinge of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. For understond wel, that after tyme that a man hath defouled his

baptisme by sinne, if he wole come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by penitence and shrifte and satisfaccioun; and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to which he may shryven him; and the thridde, if he have lyf to parfournen it.

§87. Thanne shal man looke and considere, that if he wole maken a trewe and a profitable confessioun, ther moste be foure condiciouns. First, it moot been in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as seyde the king Ezekias to god: 'I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf in bitternesse of myn herte.' This condicioun of bitternesse hath fyve signes. The firste is, that confessioun moste be shamefast, nat for to coveire ne hyden his sinne, for he hath agilt his god and defouled his soule. And her-of seith seint Augustin: 'the herte travailleth for shame of his sinne'; and for he hath greet shamefastnesse, he is digne to have greet mercy of god. Swich was the confession of the publican, that wolde nat heven up hise eyen to hevene, for he hadde offended god of hevene; for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the mercy of god. And ther-of seith seint Augustin, that swich shamefast folk been next foryevenesse and remissioun. Another signe is humilitee in confessioun; of which seith seint Peter, 'Humbleth yow under the might of god.' The hond of god is mighty in confession, for ther-by god foryeveth thee thy sinnes; for he allone hath the power. And this humilitee shal been in herte, and in signe outward; for right as he hath humilitee to god in his herte, right so sholde he humble his body outward to the preest that sit in goddes place. For which in no manere, sith that Crist is sovereyn and the preest mene and mediatour bitwixe Crist and the sinnere, and the sinnere is the laste by wey of resoun, thanne sholde nat the sinnere sitte as heighe as his confessour, but knele biforn him or at his feet, but-if maladie destourbe it. For he shal nat taken kepe who sit there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord, and comth for to axe mercy and maken his accord, and set him doun anon by the lord, men wolde holden him outrageous, and nat worthy so sone for to have remissioun ne mercy. The thridde signe is, how that thy shrift sholde be ful of teres, if man may; and if man may nat wepe with hise bodily eyen, lat him wepe in herte. Swich was the confession of seint Peter; for after that he hadde forsake Iesu Crist, he wente out and weep ful bitterly. The fourthe signe is, that he ne lette nat for shame to shewen his confessioun. Swich was the confessioun of the Magdelene, that ne spared, for no shame of hem that weren atte feste, for to go to oure lord Iesu Crist and biknowe to him hir sinnes. The fifthe signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the penaunce that him is enioyned for hise sinnes; for certes Iesu Crist, for the giltes of a man, was obedient to the deeth.

§88. The seconde condicion of verray confession is, that it be hastily doon; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde, evere the lenger that he taried to warisshe him-self, the more wolde it corrupte and haste him to his deeth; and eek the wounde wolde be the wors for to hele. And right so fareth sinne, that longe tyme is in a man unshewed. Certes, a man oghte hastily shewen hise sinnes for manye causes; as for drede of deeth, that cometh ofte sodenly, and is in no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place; and eek the drecching of o synne draweth in another; and eek the lenger that he tarieth, the ferther he is fro Crist. And if he abyde to his laste day, scarsly may he shryven him or remembre him of hise sinnes, or repenten him, for the grevous maladie of his deeth. And for-as-muche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Iesu Crist, whanne he hath spoken, he shal crye to Iesu Crist at his laste day, and scarsly wol he herkne him. And understond that this condicioun moste han foure thinges. Thy shrift moste be purveyed bifore and avysed; for wikked haste doth no profit; and that a man conne shryve him of hise sinnes be it of pryde, or of envye, and so forth of the spesces and circumstances; and that he have comprehended in his minde the nombre and the greetnesse of hise sinnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in sinne; and eek that he be contrit of hise sinnes, and in stedefast purpos, by the grace of god, nevere eft to falle in sinne; and eek that he drede and countrewaite him-self, that he flee the occasiouns of sinne to whiche he is enclyned. Also thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy sinnes to o man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another; that is to understonde, in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede; for it nis but stranglinge of thy soule. For certes, Iesu Crist is entierly al good; in him nis noon inperfeccioun; and therefore outhere he foryeveth al parfitly or never a deel. I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitauncer for certein sinne, that thou art bounde to shewen him al the remenaunt of thy sinnes, of whiche thou hast be shriven to thy curat, but-if it lyke to thee of thyn humilitee; this is no departinge of shrifte. Ne I seye nat, ther-as I speke of divisoun of confessioun, that if thou have lycence for to shryve thee to a discreet and an honeste preest, where thee lyketh, and by lycence of thy curat, that thou ne mayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy sinnes. But lat no blotte be bihinde; lat no sinne been untold, as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou shalt be shriven to thy curat, telle him eek alle the sinnes that thou hast doon sin thou were last

y-shriven; this is no wikked entente of divisioun of shrifte.

§89. Also the verray shrifte axeth certeine condiciouns. First, that thou shryve thee by thy free wil, noght constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thinges; for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wil, that by his free wil he confesse his trespas; and that noon other man telle his sinne but he him-self, ne he shal nat nayte ne denye his sinne, ne wratthe him agayn the preest for his amonestinge to leve sinne. The seconde condicioun is, that thy shrift be laweful; that is to seyn, that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that hereth thy confessioun, been verrailly in the feith of holy chirche; and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Iesu Crist, as Caym or Iudas. And eek a man moot accusen him-self of his owene trespas, and nat another; but he shal blame and wyten him-self and his owene malice of his sinne, and noon other; but nathelees, if that another man be occasioun or entyker of his sinne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his sinne is aggregated, or elles that he may nat pleynly shryven him but he telle the persone with which he hath sinned; thanne may he telle; so that his entente ne be nat to bakbyte the persone, but only to declaren his confessioun.

§90. Thou ne shall nat eek make no lesinges in thy confessioun; for humilitee, per-aventure, to seyn that thou hast doon sinnes of whiche that thou were nevere gilty. For Seint Augustin seith: if thou, by cause of thyn humilitee, makest lesinges on thy-self, though thou ne were nat in sinne biforn, yet artow thanne in sinne thurgh thy lesinges. Thou most eek shewe thy sinne by thyn owene propre mouth, but thou be wexe doumb, and nat by no lettre; for thou that hast doon the sinne, thou shalt have the shame therfore. Thou shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to covere the more thy sinne; for thanne bigylestow thy-self and nat the preest; thou most tellen it pleynly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible. Thou shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseille thee, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisie, ne for no cause, but only for the doute of Iesu Crist and the hele of thy soule. Thou shalt nat eek renne to the preest sodeynly, to tellen him lightly thy sinne, as who-so telleth a lape or a tale, but avysely and with greet devocioun. And generally, shryve thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte thou aryse by confessioun. And thogh thou shryve thee after than ones of sinne, of which thou hast be shriven, it is the more merite. And, as seith seint Augustin, thou shalt have the more lightly releasing and grace of god, bothe of sinne and of peyne. And certes, ones a yere atte leeste wey it is laweful for to been housled; for certes ones a yere alle thinges renovellen.

Explicit secunda pars Penitencie; et sequitur tercia pars eiusdem, de Satisfaccione.

§91. Now have I told you of verray Confessioun, that is the seconde partie of Penitence.

The thridde partie of Penitence is Satisfaccioun; and that stant most generally in almesse and in bodily peyne. Now been ther three manere of almesses; contricion of herte, where a man offreth himself to god; another is, to han pitee of defaute of hise neighebores; and the thridde is, in yevinge of good conseil goostly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely in sustenance of mannes fode. And tak keep, that a man hath need of thise thinges generally; he hath need of fode, he hath nede of clothing, and herberwe, he hath nede of charitable conseil, and visitinge in prisone and in maladie, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thou mayst nat visite the nedeful with thy persone, visite him by thy message and by thy yiftes. Thise been generally almesses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporel richesses or discrecioun in conseilinge. Of thise werkes shaltow heren at the day of dome.

§92. Thise almesses shaltow doon of thyne owene propre thinges, and hastily, and prively if thou mayst; but nathelees, if thou mayst nat doon it prively, thou shalt nat forbere to doon almesse though men seen it; so that it be nat doon for thank of the world, but only for thank of Iesu Crist. For as witnesseth Seint Mathew, *capitulum quinto*, 'A citee may nat been hid that is set on a montayne; ne men lighte nat a lanterne and put it under a busshel; but men sette it on a candle-stikke, to yeve light to the men in the hous. Right so shal youre light lighten bifore men, that they may seen youre gode werkes, and glorifie youre fader that is in hevene.'

§93. Now as to speken of bodily peyne, it stant in preyeres, in wakinges, in fastinges, in vertuose techinges of orisouns. And ye shul understonde, that orisouns or preyeres is for to seyn a pilous wil of herte, that redresseth it in god and expresseth it by word outward, to remoeven harmes and to han thinges espirituel and durable, and somtyme temporel thinges; of whiche orisouns, certes, in the orisoun of the *Pater-noster*, hath Iesu Crist enclosed most thinges. Certes, it is privileged of three thinges in his dignitee, for which it is more digne than any other preyere; for that Iesu Crist him-self maked it; and it is short, for it sholde be coud the more lightly, and for to withholden it the more esily in

herte, and helpen him-self the ofter with the orisoun; and for a man sholde be the lasse wery to seyen it, and for a man may nat excusen him to lerne it, it is so short and so esy; and for it comprehendeth in it-self alle gode preyerer. The expositioun of this holy preyere, that is so excellent and digne, I bitake to thise maistres of theologie; save thus muchel wol I seyn: that, whan thou prayest that god sholde foryeve thee thy gyltes as thou foryevest hem that agilen to thee, be ful wel war that thou be nat out of charitee. This holy orisoun amenuseth eek venial sinne; and therfore it aperteneth specially to penitence.

§94. This preyere moste be trewely seyde and in verray feith, and that men preyere to god ordinatly and discreetly and devoutly; and alwey a man shal putten his wil to be subget to the wille of god. This orisoun moste eek been seyde with greet humblesse and ful pure; honestly, and nat to the anoyance of any man or womman. It moste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. It avayleth eek agayn the vyces of the soule; for, as seith seint Ierome, 'By fastinge been saved the vyces of the flesh, and by preyere the vyces of the soule.'

§95. After this, thou shalt understonde, that bodily peyne stant in wakinge; for Iesu Crist seith, 'waketh, and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun.' Ye shul understanden also, that fastinge stant in three thinges; in forberinge of bodily mete and drinke, and in forberinge of worldly Iolitee, and in forberinge of deedly sinne; this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen him fro deedly sinne with al his might.

§96. And thou shalt understanden eek, that god ordeyned fastinge; and to fastinge appertenen foure thinges. Largenesse to povre folk, gladnesse of herte espirituel, nat to been angry ne anoyed, ne grucche for he fasteth; and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure; that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth.

§97. Thanne shaltow understonde, that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techinge, by word or by wrytinge, or in ensample. Also in weringe of heyres or of stamin, or of haubergeons on hir naked flesh, for Cristes sake, and swiche manere penances. But war thee wel that swiche manere penances on thy flesh ne make nat thyn herte bitter or angry or anoyed of thy-self; for bettre is to caste away thyn heyre, than for to caste away the sikernes of Iesu Crist. And therfore seith seint Paul: 'Clothe yow, as they that been chosen of god, in herte of misericorde, debonairetee, suffraunce, and swich manere of clothinge'; of whiche Iesu Crist is more apayed than of heyres, or haubergeons, or hauberkes.

§98. Thanne is disciplyne eek in knockinge of thy brest, in scourginge with yerdes, in knelinges, in tribulacions; in suffringe paciently wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or lesinge of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of child, or othere freendes.

§99. Thanne shaltow understonde, whiche thinges destourben penaunce; and this is in foure maneres, that is, drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, desperacion. And for to speke first of drede; for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce; ther-agayns is remedie for to thinke, that bodily penaunce is but short and litel at regard of the peyne of helle, that is so cruel and so long, that it lasteth with-outen ende.

§100. Now again the shame that a man hath to shryven him, and namely, thise ypocrites that wolden been holden so parfite that they han no nede to shryven hem; agayns that shame, sholde a man thinke that, by wey of resoun, that he that hath nat been ashamed to doon foule thinges, certes him oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thinges, and that is confessiouns. A man sholde eek thinke, that god seeth and wool alle hise thoghtes and alle hise werkes; to him may no thing been hid ne covered. Men sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of dome, to hem that been nat penitent and shriven in this present lyf. For alle the creatures in erthe and in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world.

§101. Now for to speken of the hope of hem that been negligent and slowe to shryven hem, that stant in two maneres. That oon is, that he hopeth for to live longe and for to purchacen muche richesse for his delyt, and thanne he wol shryven him; and, as he seith, him semeth thanne tymely y-nough to come to shrifte. Another is, surquidrie that he hath in Cristes mercy. Agayns the firste vyce, he shal thinke, that oure lyf is in no sikernes; and eek that alle the riches in this world ben in aventure, and passen as a shadwe on the wal. And, as seith seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of god, that nevere shal the peyne stinte of hem that nevere wolde withdrawen hem fro sinne, hir thanks, but ay continue in sinne; for thilke perpetuel wil to do sinne shul they han perpetuel peyne.

§102. Wanhope is in two maneres: the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist; that other is that they thincken, that they ne mighte nat longe persevere in goodness. The firste wanhope comth of that he

demeth that he hath sinned so greetly and so ofte, and so longe leyn in sinne, that he shal nat be saved. Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thinke, that the passion of Iesu Crist is more strong for to unbinde than sinne is strong for to binde. Agayns the seconde wanhope, he shal thinke, that as ofte as he falleth he may aryse agayn by penitence. And thogh he never so longe have leyn in sinne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven him to mercy. Agayns the wanhope, that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thinke, that the feblesse of the devel may no-thing doon but-if men wol suffren him; and eek he shal han strengthe of the help of god, and of al holy chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if him list.

§103. Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruit of penaunce; and, after the word of Iesu Crist, it is the endelees blisse of hevene, ther loye hath no contrariouste of wo ne grevaunce, ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf; ther-as is the sikernes fro the peyne of helle; ther-as is the blisful companye that reioysen hem everemo, everich of otheres loye; ther-as the body of man, that whylom was foul and derk, is more cleer than the sonne; ther-as the body, that whylom was syk, freele, and feble, and mortal, is immortal, and so strong and so hool that ther may no-thing apeyren it; ther-as ne is neither hunger, thurst, ne cold, but every soule replenissed with the sighte of the parfit knowinge of god. This blisful regne may men purchase by poverté espirituel, and the glorie by lowenesse; the plentee of loye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaille; and the lyf by deeth and mortificacion of sinne.

Here taketh the makere of this book his leve.

§104. Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this litel tretis or rede, that if ther be any thing in it that lyketh hem, that ther-of they thanken oure lord Iesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse. And if ther be any thing that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn unconninge, and nat to my wil, that wolde ful fayn have seyde better if I hadde had conninge. For oure boke seith, 'al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine'; and that is myn entente. Wherefore I biseke yow mekely for the mercy of god, that ye preye for me, that Crist have mercy on me and foryeve me my giltes: —and namely, of my translacions and endytinges of worldly vanitees, the whiche I revoke in my retracciouns: as is the book of Troilus; The book also of Fame; The book of the nyntene Ladies; The book of the Duchesse; The book of saint Valentynes day of the Parlement of Briddes; The tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sounen in-to sinne; The book of the Leoun; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance; and many a song and many a lecherous lay; that Crist for his grete mercy foryeve me the sinne. But of the translacion of Boece de Consolacione, and othere bokes of Legendes of seintes, and omelies, and moralitee, and devocioun, that thanke I oure lord Iesu Crist and his blisful moder, and alle the seintes of hevene; bisekinge hem that they from hennes-forth, un-to my lyves ende, sende me grace to biwayle my giltes, and to studie to the salvacioun of my soule:—and graunte me grace of verray penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun to doon in this present lyf; thurgh the benigne grace of him that is king of kinges and preest over alle preestes, that boghte us with the precious blood of his herte; so that I may been oon of hem at the day of dome that shulle be saved: *Qui cum patre, &c.*

Here is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury, compiled by Geoffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Iesu Crist have mercy. Amen.